

Law of Inertia

Issue 6

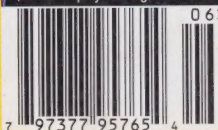
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*Marilyn Manson and The Columbine Killings US Foreign Policy and Public Relations
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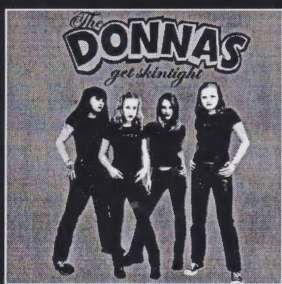
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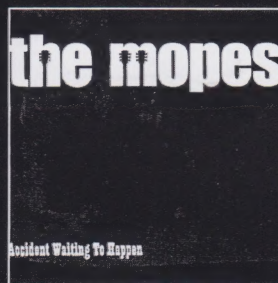
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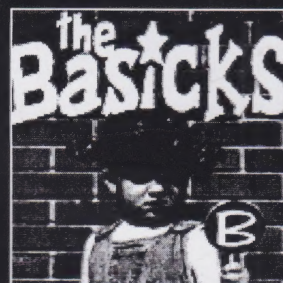
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Law of Inertia

Magazine

Issue #6: fall/winter 1999

Don't Beat Me Up:

Ross of Inertia

---Publisher/co-editor/all graphic design. Hates cold weather.

E-mail me: ross@lawofinertia.com

Don't Beat Me Up Either:

Dan Frantic

---co-editor/organizational superstar/tells Ross what is bad. Hates wiggley vegi-dogs.

E-mail me: Dan@lawofinertia.com

People with Pens: Ross, Dan, Alex Sigfried, Joey Spitfire, David Kaplan, Emily Bodenber, Amber Greene, Justin the King of Prussia, Jake Futernick

People who Hate Bad Records: Ross, Dan, Jason Murphy, Pablo RockAfucker, Deano Proserpio

People with Cameras: Well, Ross, Shawnie, Dave Mandel, Karoline Collins, Michael Iglar, Jacob Futernick, and some other people that I don't know the names of.

Microphone Check (commas and spelling errors): Dan, Ross, Nick

Web Dude: Ross

Cover Artwork: Ross with assistance from Dan.

Advertisement Rates

1/4 page (3.75 x 5) = \$45

1/2 page (7.5 x 5) = \$75

Full Page (7.5 x 10) = \$120

Back and Inside Cover = Get in touch
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Ad Deadline for Issue #7:

November 19th, 1999

Distribution: Bottlenekk, Choke Inc., Saul Goodman, Deep Elm, Desert Moon, Full Tilt, Initial, Lumberjack, No Idea, Revelation, Vagrant Records, Very, Furnace Distro, Roundflat, Contrast, Pound of Shit, InSound, Tower Records, Generation Records (NYC), Soapbox (NYC), Temperence, Green Hell (Germany), Trece-grabaciones (Spain)

Wholesale / Distribution: We sell LOI for \$1 a copy to kids, bands, or distros wishing to order copies. Minimum order: 5 copies.

Press Run: 3,000 copies

Back Issues:

#1-#2 Soul Doubt

#3 W/ Compound Red, Elliott, Catch 22, No Knife, Brandtson, Avail, Diesel Boy, The Glassjaw, Silent Majority, and more.

#4 Soul Doubt

#5 W/ Jimmy Eat World, One King Down, Kid Dynamite, Fireside, Atom and His Package, Bluetip, At the Drive-in, Adamantium, Brian McTernan, and more.

Issue #7 will feature interviews with females in the punk scene.

Issue #6 will have a press run of 4,000 copies.

Issue #3 is \$2 ppd.

Issue #5 is \$3 ppd.

Go to the web site for more info on back issues.

Law of Inertia would like to thank:

Dan and Ross' families, all the writers, all the bands, Rikki Torres, Amber Greene, Pablo RockAfucker, Bobbo, Megan and Claire Callow, Jake Futernick, Rama@Big Wheel Recreation, James @ Saul Goodman, Ari @ InSound, Susan @ Revelation, Michael @ Nothing Left, Maria @ Blue Ghost, Time in Malta, Dave @ Holiday Matinee, Paul @ Crank!, Ian @ EVR, Kevin @ Vagrant, Andy, Artie and Phil of Errortype:11, Edaline, The '65 Film Show, Ken @ Tree, Planes Mistaken For Stars, Jessica @ Hyper PR, George @ Zum, Hillary, Sasha Meltzer, Ovary Gabe, 44 Double David, Nick Powers.

Greetings ladies and gents, and welcome to another edition of Law of Inertia's wild hay ride through hell. We are pleased to bring you what is surely our most confusing issue in terms of logistics and organization. On the plus this is our favorite issue ever. I must admit, I was a bit disappointed with the quality of issue #5 as far as post-print look and feel, but we're back, with a bolder and better issue.

Dan was just telling me outside our favorite club in San Francisco, Pop Scene, that he thought issue #6 would be better than the best issue of Time Magazine ever. I don't know about that, but I do know that Time Magazine could never have had such a fun time doing a single copy of their magazine. I really don't think any of those big magazines, be they music or current events realize how fun and exciting it can be to produce another issue of a magazine. I mean, the 50 millionth time the editor of Time saw his/her publication in Tower Records it probably got really old. For us, we are so excited when some kid from England tells us he got our zine in Virgin Megastore and opted for LOI instead of the new issue of Alternative Press (although, I must admit AP is one of my very guilty pleasures). Or the 20 millionth time the letters to the editor section in Time featured a note from someone from another country--or another state-- it must have lost the glow it had when that magazine first started. Dan and I still dance around the room when a new label ads us to their promo list, much less a letter from someone in Spain telling us they want to distribute LOI!

I hate to sound cheesey or cliché, but Dan and I live for the next issue of LOI. We have no qualms about staying in on Saturday to finish off the layout of a column or article (at least I don't, because Dan has a life and I simply do not). LOI is the best thing that has ever happened to me, because if not for LOI Magazine and Records I would be watching way too many Simpsons re-runs and the 50 millionth time you hear Homer yell "Doh!" in a single afternoon can kill a greater man.

So please be nice to this issue. We have worked so hard to bring it to you and we hope you respect the amount of work and time we have put in to bring you what we think is some of the best in independent writing out there. Also, feel free to e-mail us or write us and call us on our bullshit or tell us you love us. We do not get enough fan mail, and we sure could use more. Oh by the way, no thanks to the San Francisco Guitar Center. Until issue #7 (the all females in punk issue) this is Ross and Dan saying kick out the style and bring back the jam.

Out.

-Ross of Inertia and Dan Frantic

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This summer has not been what I expected it to be. I guess sometimes that's a good thing—summers filled with spontaneity and off-the-cusp wanderings like road-trips or all night dancing with strange girls from strange countries where they have synonyms for the word "love," can easily be fun and memorable. In this case the summer has taken some unexpected turns occupationally. In other words, this interim between school sessions was originally planned far differently than how it actually came out. Let me start off with a brief history of the different employment opportunities I have undertaken this summer.

What I originally planned to do this summer in order to keep myself busy in between marathon zine-production sessions was to intern at a well known music periodical in the Bay Area (not MRR). So, I began my tenure at this magazine and worked hard for three days. The staff loved me, the magazine's output tripled in the three days I worked there, Marlboro wanted to advertise on the back cover! On my fourth day, I and the rest of the staff—who, unlike myself, were paid—were fired because the magazine was bankrupt and the management saw no need to re-finance and reorganize in order to keep a much beloved Bay Area magazine afloat. I was out of a job.

But, that did not stop me. No siree-bob, I kept on looking for work. After all, I am 21 years old and I'll have to get a real job soon, so why not practice for the show. So, I hit up my mom to flip through her corporate roladex and see if she knew anyone looking for a summer employee to work for the minimum accoutrements: you know, \$20 an hour, (401) K, full medical and dental benefits, profit sharing in addition to stock options, etc. I settled on a successful software firm that a friend of my mom's worked at. I worked there for one day and completely reorganized the marketing department's periodical rack. I guess they thought that the editor of an up-and-coming zine was perfectly suited for the job. It was mind-numbingly boring, but after eight hours on the job I felt I had made a good start. The next day I was called and told not to come into work that day, or the next day after that, as the company suddenly realized they did not have enough money to pay me. Great. My periodical organization skills were put to waste. Don't make me open up a can of Dewey Decimal on your ass!

By now I was getting a bit weary, but had still not given up the fight. After all, it was only about three weeks into the summer. At about that time, Dan got a job at a well-known record store on Haight Street. As much as I hate the ex-flower child, current crusty-suburban-pot-smoker center of the world, I hopped on the 43 Masonic bus and headed across town to try my luck with a resume. I was received very well at a thrift store that specialized in vintage cloths a la Austin Powers. And, at a dramatic pay decrease from my pre-summer expectations, I accepted the position.

I worked there for a little over a month before the manager went psycho on me. I was a good worker—I was, I swear—but when the manager expected me to know where stuff was that no one had ever even bothered to tell me existed, it became a little bit unfair. She would tell me to go get a new mop-head, so I would ask her where they were and she would go ballistic. I soon learned to not ask her where anything was and fake my way through everything. This obviously detracted from my ability to perform all my assigned tasks in a timely manner. Needless to say, the day came when she fired a co-worker for merely talking to a friend that came in the store. So, when a friend of mine (yes, it was Dan Frantic) came in ten minutes later, I knew I was history... and I was. I still

want to know where those damn mop-heads were.

The summer was winding down and I did, after all, have about a thousand dollars saved up from the three attempts at working I had made. I finally gave into my mom's complaints that working on my zine and record label for four hours a day did not pay, thus it did not constitute an occupation. I started temporary work: entering data into spreadsheets for hours upon mindless hours. It was boring, but hot-diggity-dog did it pay well. \$14 an hour to sit there, answer the occasional telephone call, and transfer numbers and addresses on sheets of paper to a computer screen. This was my kind of work. The downside to my dream job was that sitting there staring into a computer screen for 8 hours a day does not do wonders for the body's energy levels. Thus I would collapse when I got home from work each night and couldn't enjoy the summer with my friends.

Now the summer is over for all intensive purposes because I'm prepping to go back to New York for school. And, as I sit here and fold the cable-knit sweater my mom got me senior year of high school, I have decided some very important things for my life. I have accepted that I was not meant to do retail work, as I am not one of those people that can be friendly and happy to customers on a whim. Nor do I deal well with other's expectations that I must fulfill or face the consequences. There's too much pressure there, and honestly I never felt comfortable pushing second-hand clothes on someone who just did not want to by a zoot-suit.

Another conclusion I have come to is that I need stimulating work to keep myself going. I need to be around people but not be expected to sell them something they do not want. For example, although the temporary job of data entry paid well, I felt so emotionally drained at the end of the day that I couldn't concentrate on any work of my own. Solution: find a career that affords me the opportunity to converse with people and allows me use my creative energy as well. I'm not talking about being a ventriloquist or a caricature artist or anything like that, and I'm not necessarily saying that I want to exclude the business world from my future career choices. Instead, I mean that I need to find a career where I am not doing the exact same thing over and over and over again throughout an eight-hour day. I would kill myself if I did that for the rest of my life.

Also, I definitely need to go into business for myself. I have always had a dislike of authority, thus I often clash with those that I am subordinate to. So, after I gain some experience in entry level positions after college I am pretty sure that I will start my own company/corporation/multi-national-waste-laying-conglomerate. This way no one can fire me, if anyone screws up I only have me to blame, I can take all the credit for anything good that happens, and I can take my work load for any given amount of time in any direction I see fit. Yes, that's ideal! I will be my own boss!

So hopefully you, my dear reader, have empathized with me and possibly found some commonalities to your own life in this article. If not, you are probably one of the lucky ones that started an upstart internet company this summer and are now rolling in dough. Don't get me wrong, I have nothing against retail outlets or people who work in them, in fact I feel for them because I've been there and I know what they have to go through on a daily basis. I do, however, feel that an Ivy League education should in theory take me above the level of record and thrift stores. Then again, in a day and age when the guy who takes your order at Burger King is old enough to shave, I really doubt that will ever happen.

Dan Frantic: Pins and Needles

I'm starting to fall apart.

Just in little ways, mind you. Clerking ten hours a day at a record store has made my legs ache from standing on them so much. Concert after concert of explosively loud rock music has taken a toll, albeit a gradual one, on my hearing. And the hot lazy summer days, one day after another of sitting in the sweltering muggy heat of my room under a dim yellowish light because the curtains are broken and won't open unless I yank them off entirely, have drained me of any motivation that I may once have had. The hotter it gets, the more glacial my productivity becomes. On any given afternoon I'd much rather collapse onto my bed for a few hours of uneasy sleep or plug myself into the warm fuzz of the television set than write any of the half-dozen letters I owe to my friends around the country or perform the arduous task of spell-checking the fine publication you hold in your hand right now.

In other words, the Law of Inertia is beginning to take effect, and in a big way. Traditionally, I've always been the type to surround myself with as much activity as possible; perhaps it's just a product of some deep psychological fear of emptiness, but I've always felt the need to fill awkward conversation pauses with my incessant chatter or find some sort of work to do when I'm at home, whether it be on the zine or the record label or even just trying to create some semblance of order out of the mess that is my room. Like my father, who can't stand idleness in any form, I get frustrated when I feel that my creative output is being stifled by the sheer repressive force of my own laziness. I understand completely how easy and appealing it is to sink into a life of stuporous complacency, and that's all the more reason why I find myself constantly running from the prospect that maybe what I'm doing isn't all that valuable in the long run.

It's strange, really, that the punk community claims to repudiate the value systems that our capitalist society propagates, yet in many ways we have adopted and embellished upon the puritan work ethic that stands as the foundation. Our subculture has consistently set itself apart from other youth movements in that it veers away from the producer/consumer paradigm that is characterized by a select group of people creating an art form – the product – that is then consumed by the larger populace, without any of the reactive criticism that is so vital to a healthy and well-informed community. In other words, punk, unlike many movements, is a two-way street. If someone is putting forth a message you don't like, then under the dictates of punk you have an obligation to make your voice heard in protest. In theory, at least, we are striving to create a world in which everybody

is involved in some form of creative expression, a sort of dialogue on a grand scale that keeps everybody active and involved. It's utopian, yes, but at its best it's also a sort of real-world manifestation of the American ideal that everybody should have something unique and special to contribute to the larger community.

But of course, the real world doesn't function like that at all. And even well-intentioned folks such as myself can all too easily find themselves mouthing vague platitudes about activism and creativity but doing very little to put their money where their collective mouths are. It's not enough to be active and creative for a few years then sit on your laurels, confident that you've paid your dues and have earned the right to sit back and watch the world go by without raising your voice. Creativity is an evolutionary process, so it's perfectly understandable if what galvanizes you into action now isn't the same thing that did it for you five years ago, but there's no excuse to give the act of creation up entirely.

I can completely see why people become jaded with punk, for any of a number of reasons: the music starts to sound redundant, it feels less revolutionary than it once seemed, it seems to offer only a finite number of opportunities for creative output. I think it's healthy to move on if something no longer feels relevant to you; that's part of why trends come and go, but it's also why so many ex-punk rockers are moving on to other musical styles. I myself am listening to a lot of music that my friends probably would have viciously mocked me for had I been into it three years ago. This sort of stylistic evolution is perfectly fine, if it reflects a desire to continue doing something pertinent and new. I'm reminded of the legions of aging hippies who spend their futile lives loitering around Haight street where I work, clinging to some empty movement that lost its integrity years ago when its focus shifted away from societal change towards the marketing of a faux-rebellious culture to a bunch of dupes from the suburbs. But I'm also reminded of a certain older friend who used to be highly involved in the Bay Area independent punk scene but who now claims that because he's older (ergo, wiser) he doesn't need to fight for the ideals that once were the centerpiece of his life.

Creativity is a tricky thing. Its momentum can be sporadic, flowing in abundance then grinding to a halt. It can't be forced. But it can't be forgotten, either. The human race may have plenty of flaws, but the primary thing that sets us apart from other species is our ability to express ourselves to each other.

When this ability is left dormant, our communities become nothing more than a grandiose version of a self-consuming petri dish. Creation can often be painful, and halting, and ugly. The Great American Novel wasn't written in a day, after all. But creation is also vital. And I'm beginning to learn that next time I start to fall apart,

I'm going to have to snap out of it and start putting myself together again.

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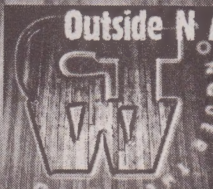
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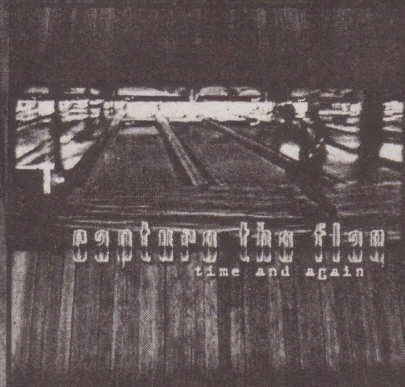
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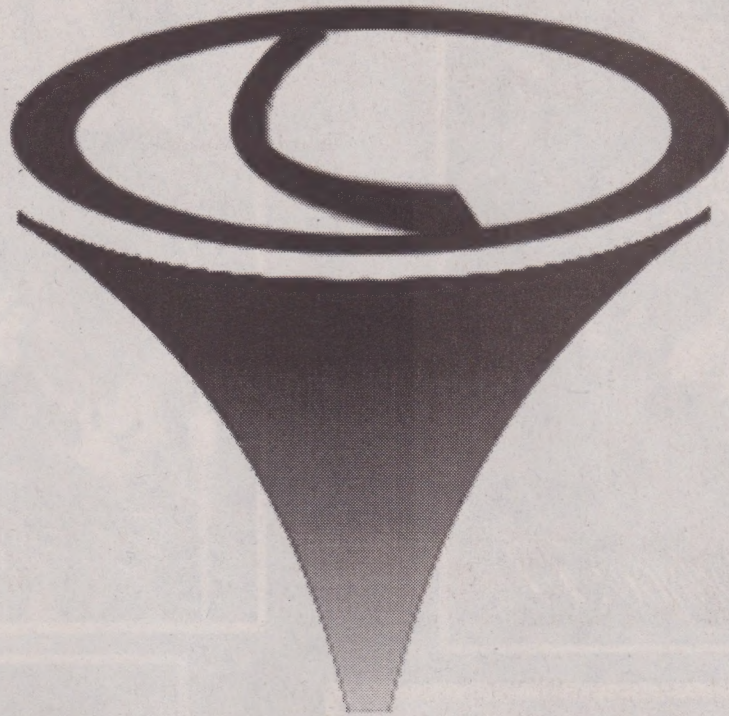


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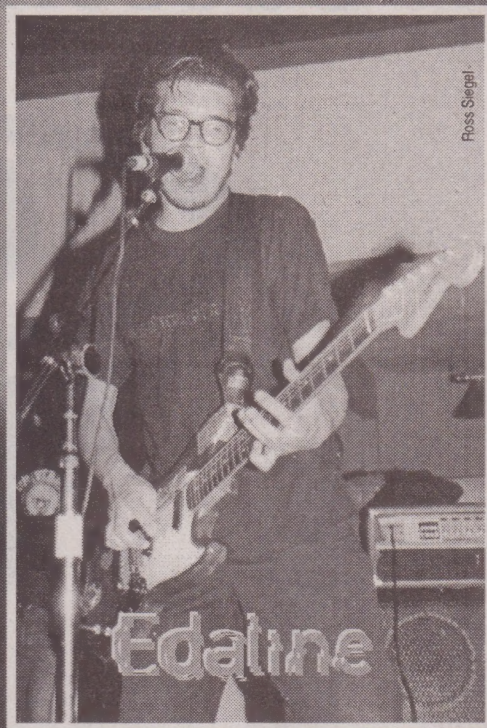
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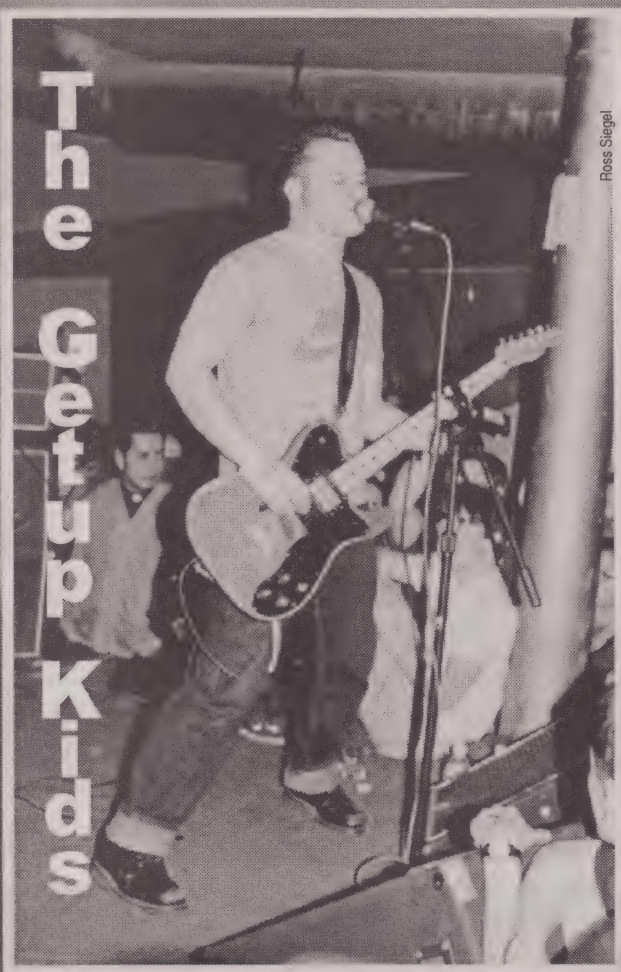
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Photo Gallery





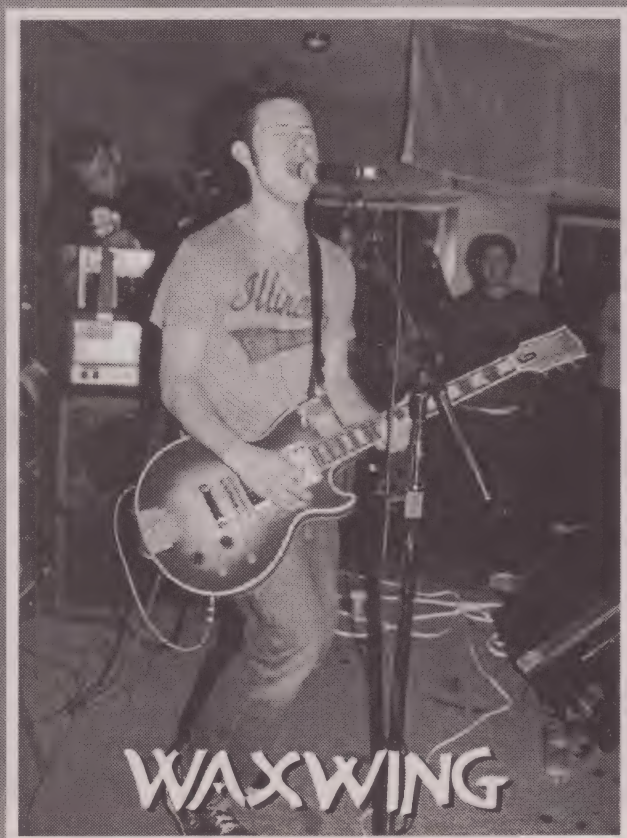
The Getup Kids

Ross Siegel



Dave Mandel

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WAXWING



Ross Siegel

Sarge

This one goes out to all you scenesters who cry at Mineral shows and are floorpunching their little brothers for the lack of hardcore cartharsis caused by **Ten Yard Fight's** breakup. But don't worry 'cause I'm starting a band called Excite Bike.... As for other all-star emo bands, we have **The Getup Kids** signing to the mother-of-all-emo-labels, **Vagrant Records**. Wait, that can't be right. Let me double check. Oh, I guess it is. Does anyone else think it's really cool that **Face to Face** and **The GUKs** are on the same label? Yeah, I didn't think so.... **Crank! Records'** recording artists, **The Vehicle Birth**, have broken up. It's kind of sad, but then again they weren't a very good band.... Just when you thought **Magic: The Gathering** had gone out of vogue, everyone's favorite vampires are back for one more album before calling it quits. Yes, **Ink and Dagger** are putting out one more scary CD on **New American Dream** and then they will join the (un)dead.... The fantastic zine, **Nothing Left**, is going on hiatus for a few months while deciding if emo literature still deserves its due.... Even though **Revelation** sent me a press release a few months ago claiming they had "signed" Canadian rockers, **Grade**, this is false. Instead, **Victory** has signed **Grade**. Why do I feel that this really sucks?... Just as I do a stinking interview with them-- which I thought was a pretty good one at that-- Albany hardcore kings, **One King Down**, go and break up. Oh wait, scratch that, they're back together with Rob Fusco.... Chicago indie Gods, **Braid**, have called it quits. Yes, it's true, but at least they didn't put out an awful record before breaking up.... I recently went to a **Dillinger 4** show, and let me tell you they freakin' rocked. I was having a great time until their bassist took all his clothes off (he has breasts, mind you) and had someone hold his one inch-long, er, wiener. Tasteless.... Billie Joe of **Green Day** fame recently started a record label called **Adeline Records**. They have already released records from **One Man Army** and **AFI** and have others scheduled including the next **Criminals** record.... For those of you that have not received one of the many press releases on the subject that I have, a **Metroschifter** tribute album is in the works (even though the band is still together). Bands covering **Metroschifter** songs for the "Encapsulated" CD, due out later this year on **Initial**, are art/punk-rock favorites **The Promise Ring** and **The Getup Kids**.... The LOI strike-force uncovered a mini bidding war that went on over the amazing **At the Drive-in**. The eventual winners were **DEN Enterprises**, a label that no one I know has ever heard of. Others in the running were Sub Pop, Jade Tree, and Big Wheel Rec.... Guitar god to millions, **Joe Strummer**, is touring again. Apparently he is going to put out a record on **Epitaph**, but I can't quite say for sure so don't quote me on that.... It is rumored that **Quicksand** are going to do an *ep* with **Some Records**. I guess it figures since Walter owns a third of the NYC label.... I hear that SF based **Crumb** has broken up for the time being. Guitarist Mark has recently formed a band with Jim of **Jimmy Eat World**, Rachel of **That Dog**, and Colby of **Knapsack**. No word on a release or a label.... **Fat Wreck** has signed Richmond punk superstars, **Avail**. Did anyone else think that Avail didn't quite fit in on **Lookout!**?... Apparently this is old news, but the only hardcore band left in Minnesota has broken up. That's right, **Harvest** is no longer and all 12 hardcore kids in Minneapolis were seen spray-painting 'punk's not dead' all over the downtown area.... Yes, the rumor is true: Washington DC groove-core rockers; **Damnation AD**, have broken up. Hopefully guitarist Ken Olden will find yet another side project to pay the bills.... Hardcore badboys, **Good Clean Fun**, and cyber-core misfit, **Atom and his Package**, have a split seven inch planned. GCF will cover Atom's "Hats off to Halford" while Atom will cover GCF's "Shopping For a Crew." No word on a release date or a label yet.... **Law of Inertia Records** recently signed a band from Virginia Beach called **The '65 Film Show**. They are flooring crowds all over the east coast with their brand of melodicore. A 6-song *ep*, produced and recorded by **Brian McTernan**, will be out around October.... So it's official: **Cursive** is back together without Steve (who now plays in **The White Octave**). Ted from **Lullaby From the Working Class** will be taking Steve's place. No word on a future release or label.... San Francisco extreme label, **Frenetic Records**, recently signed Santa Cruz's **A Great Divide**. The band is supposed to be fucking awesome so check out their forthcoming full length.... **Lookout!** has signed the amazing **Ann Beretta** from Richmond, VA.... That's all this time around but feel free to e-mail me cool gossip about your least favorite bands or tell me what a loser I am for not having anything to do tonight or tell me how much you hate E-Town Concrete.... **Rosstafarian**

Law of Inertia Records

Presents:

The "Pocket Bomb" Compilation CD

Unreleased or new tracks from Enkrypte 11,
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Ann Beretta, Metroschifter, The Wayouts,
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Label Pages



Divot
PO box 14061 Chicago,
IL 60614-0061

Web Page: www.divotrecords.com

Comments: A cool site if you have macromedia installed on your computer, boring if you don't. Too bad most people are part of the latter group. At least they're trying something new, though.

Key Selling Point: They put out the first Braid album ever!

Best Releases to Date: The "Ground Rule Double" compilation.

Online Stores

Saul Goodman

Web Page:
www.saulgoodman.com

Comments: This offshoot of Crank! Records is turning into a very good online distro. Specializing in emo rock, this store also sells a lot of bigger indie rock acts. Their prices are a bit high comparatively, but their selection is growing better every day. They also sell zines and clothing.

Key Selling Point: The site is possibly the easiest to navigate of any online record store.

Insound

Web Page: www.insound.com

Comments: Hello, what do we have here? This is a really cool online store that I've been seeing everywhere lately. What's really weird is that while looking at the home page, I noticed that Jessica Hopper of *Hit it and Quit it* zine had written a response to my *Revolution Summer* article in the last issue. How weird. Why doesn't anyone let me know about these things. Anyways, the prices are pretty good, on average about the same as Saul Goodman, but damn is this site comprehensive. They've got a great zine stand which wins them extra points, lots of good records, photo galleries, columns, etc.

Key Selling Point: This online store sells

other types of music in addition to punk and hardcore, which is definitely a plus.

E zines

Buddyhead

Web Page: www.buddyhead.com

Comments: I think this is the first real competition for Rocket-Fuel. However, in some ways Buddyhead has a ways to go before they surpass Rocket-Fuel. I mean, the layout is cool ('cause layout is really really important for an e-zine in my opinion), with cool graphics, but the site is so damn hard to navigate. Couldn't they at least have a sitemap or something to help me out? And while Buddyhead has lots of hip punk rock mp3's, videos, interviews, etc. it also focuses on topics outside the realm of punk rock, such as sports, art, literature, etc. Maybe a good comparison for Buddyhead would be to the (content and look) style of *Punk Planet* while Rocket-Fuel is more like *Nothing Left*. It's cool that Buddyhead does not necessarily spend all its time on punk and hardcore, but sometimes that's all I want out of an e-zine.

Survey Says: I like this page a lot. I think it has lots of room for improvement in architectural organization, and maybe the physical look should be a bit more dense (i.e. more colors), but this has promise.

Band Pages

Man or Astroman

Web Page: www.astroman.com

The Goods: I had heard that this page was really cool for the occasional MOAM listener to really get a clue as to what their music is about. And damn, this page is huge! Do not go to this page expecting to get some comprehensive diatribe of what is Man or Astroman if you're not ready to read... a lot. Here you get a huge bio/manifesto, descriptions of every single one of their many many releases, even a description of what I guess is their very own recording studio and a list of every single piece of equipment in it. Let's put it this way, anything you want to know about MOAM you can find on this page, and if you can't then there's like 10 e-mail addresses for all your random queries.

Survey Says: Yeah, the text could have been abridged a bit. I mean, do we really need a list of every kind of microphone in

their recording studio, or a description of every single release they've ever put out (about 55)? The page is pretty visually unpleasing too, and judging by the cover art on their new CD I think they could have done a lot better.

Videos

Fugazi "Instrument"

(Dischord)- In the middle of this film/video, a TV program, host makes a comment about the band not making music videos. Well, they still haven't, as this is a documentary and a work of art (which is not to say that music videos or documentaries are unartistic). This is the only video (other than the recent "Meeting People Is Easy" on Radiohead) in this genre that isn't dragged down by self-indulgence or egos. We don't see the boys rolling up in limos doing coke or see them feeding the hungry; this is simply a portrait of a complex band. Aesthetically, "Instrument" is astounding, mixing several different mediums and jumping from shows to practices to whatever effortlessly. Very rarely are things like this actually interesting to watch as a piece of art. The music in this is also top-notch, relying heavily on the instrumental pieces (many of which were released on the film/video's soundtrack) as well as songs that don't always get the respect they are due ("Great Cop" and "Shut The Door" floored me). There was even a little humor, dispelling the notion that these guys are totally serious socially aware stuffed shirts (the George Burns comment was classic). Whether you like Fugazi or not, this is a great film/video (though if you are a fan and do not own this, you're out of the family).

JM



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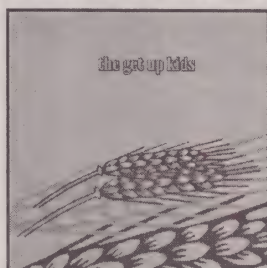
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CDep-\$6. 8"-\$6. Priority Mail-\$3.20. Check online for Airmail costs.

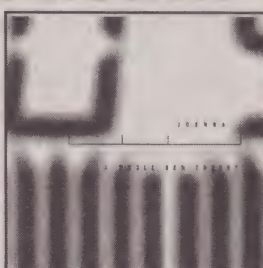
Also new and out now...



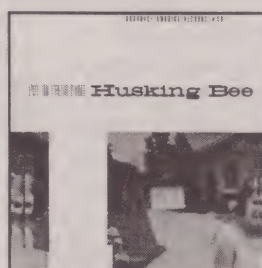
THE GET UP KIDS
"Red Letter Day"
5-song 10"/MCD.



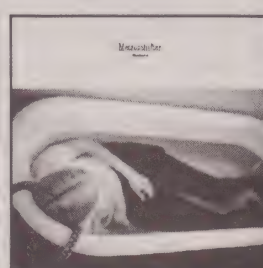
WHERE IS MY MIND
TRIBUTE TO THE PIXIES
15-song LP.



JOSHUA
"A Whole New Theory"
9-song LP/CD.



HUSKING BEE
"Put on Fresh Paint"
13-song LP/CD.



METROSCHIFTER
"Strawberries"
6-song 10"/MCD.



A Sign of the Times:

The 1999 Summer X-Games

extreme (ik strēm'), adj. 1. of a character or kind farthest removed from the ordinary or average. 2. utmost or exceedingly great in degree
3. exceeding the bounds of moderation
4. the most overused marketing term of the late 1990's

Article and Photos by Jacob Futernick



For one unseasonably warm week this summer in San Francisco (Mark Twain once said, "The coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco"), I had the pleasure of taking a week off from my illustrious day-job as an Electrolux vacuum cleaner salesman to play reporter at the ESPN X-Games. For those of you who have remained oblivious to the X-Games phenomenon, either through complete avoidance of mainstream culture, or by just plain old-fashioned burying your head in the sand, they are a highly marketed, made-by-TV, sort of "extreme" Olympics. Competitions feature events such as skateboarding, bmx biking, rock climbing, sky surfing, in-line skating, street lugeing, a snowboarding big-air contest, and other extreme sports that connote the term "Do the Dew."

Regardless of the competitions, what is truly fascinating about the X-Games is the shift in cultural dynamics that it represents. What was once viewed as fringe elements to our culture - skateboarders, rock climbers, and skydivers, are now entering mainstream culture through intense marketing of the "extreme" image. There was the sentiment floating around the X-Games, regardless of its validity, that someday it is going to be on par with the Olympics some day. With all the hype surrounding the X-Games (is anything not over-hyped anymore? "Star Wars," "Eyes Wide Shut," Y2K...), I had to see what all the hoopla was about.

I arrived by way of skateboard to the X-Games on opening day, doing a little "extreme" tourist dodging en route, and upon reaching the entrance the first extreme thing I saw was the size of the line to get in. Instead of young, tattooed, bleached-hair, slightly crazed contestants flying through the air (although that would come later), I found myself surrounded by a tremendous crowd of normal looking people.

Teeny boppers, nuclear families, twenty-something slackers, and hot girls with meat-head boyfriends swarmed the entrance.

Entering the actual X-Games facility, my first unavoidable observation was of the tremendous amount of marketing from corporate sponsors of the event. The entrance was jammed with tents promoting Heineken, the United States Marines (!?), Lee's Dungarees, Disney with their new movie "Tarzan," Sony Mini Disc players, TCI cable, Visa, Adidas, Taco Bell, AT&T, the new Chevy Xtreme truck, Pontiac, Snickers, Starburst, Playstation and of course, Mountain Dew. Behind the smorgasbord of corporate sponsor tents were the actual arenas for skateboarding, biking, and other sports with grandstands and three Jumbotron TV screens.

Every modern (dare I say post-modern) sporting event now includes Jumbotron TV screens, and the X-Games were no exception. The Jumbotron screens at the X-Games served the

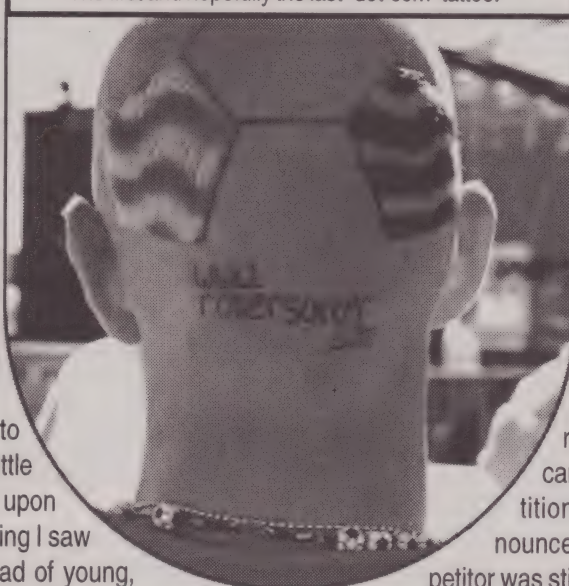
basic function of showing the action to spectators who didn't have a view of what was happening in real life, but their purpose also went beyond simple community service. At the conclusion of every event, the images being broadcast went from competition to commercials, making the X-Games is the only sporting event I've been to interspersed with more than two hours of commercial breaks.

Besides their obvious impact, the Jumbotron screens helped to create two separate worlds at the X-Games, one in real life, and another in instant replay. I can recall watching the in-line vert competition and at numerous occasions, the announcer referred to the replay while the competitor was still performing, implying that the tricks were

so amazing, they could not be fully appreciated unless seen in slow-motion replay.

The X-Games itself is based on the concept of replay.

The first and hopefully the last "dot-com" tattoo.



The competition lasted 10 days, attracting more than 100,000 people and while that is impressive in and of itself, the actual event is now finished. Yet it will continue to live on for the next year in replay syndication for Gen X'ers across the country to watch replays of X-Games competitions after spending their day as "extreme losers who use their Sport Utility Vehicles to sit in extreme traffic to and from work" according to one spectator I talked to.

To Dew, or not to Dew

10 years ago, Mountain Dew was just another obscure, neon-green soda that nobody really cared about. Now, after a tremendous marketing campaign, Mountain Dew is synonymous with the catch phrase "Do the Dew" and the extreme lifestyle. It comes as no surprise then that Mountain Dew was the company with the highest profile at the X-Games.

While I expected that people working with Mountain Dew to have an aura of self-righteousness, some of the statements given from both the employees I interviewed, and by the announcers, caught me off guard. Before the X-Games, I never thought people actually said "Do the Dew" outside of Mountain Dew commercials or elementary school playgrounds. Within my first hour inside the gates, the announcers told everyone in all honesty, "do hydrate, *Do the Dew*, do whatever." No doubt this statement, and the many others like it over the following week, were a direct result of Mountain Dew's \$1,000,000 contribution to the X-Games to become one of its main sponsors. One employee I interviewed named Thomas Wade boasted that "I could make people do almost anything I want" with the promise of free stuff to back him up. He also told me that "Mountain Dew is one of the biggest parts of the X-Games, everywhere you look, there's Mountain Dew."

Outside of those working directly with Mountain Dew (who must take the whole "extreme" thing seriously, seeing as their company helped create the "extreme" image used in marketing their product), employees from other sponsors seemed more apprehensive about their companies' presence at the X-Games. And it was only these employees and a handful of spectators I talked to who had any concerns with the advertising present. Most of the crowd circulated the various sponsors' booths with a slightly dazed, inebriated look, overwhelmed by the advertising frenzy surrounding and enticing them. It was only when I talked to people responsible for the advertising that I came across a more skeptical outlook.

One of the most outspoken critics was a DJ from a local radio station who asked that his name be withheld. After spending almost all day of every day at the X-Games, he had been exposed to a lot of the interior politics that arose between ESPN, corporate sponsors, and competitors. My interviewees' station gave out free T-shirts until they were told to stop because "it was detrimental to the sales of T-shirts by official vendors." Other things such as the lack of water fountains anywhere on the premises (while bottled water was being sold for \$2 a bottle) and a general atmosphere of everyone "kissing each others' asses" made for one disgruntled employee when I talked to him.

I talked to other cynical employees when I visited the AT&T booth



Obligatory autograph session for an X-Game gold medalist.

promoting 1-800-CALL-ATT. They had created a speed dialing contest posing the question, "Who's got the fastest fingers in the West?" where contestants attempted to dial 1-800-225-5288 (the number to make collect calls with AT&T) three times as fast as possible. Besides the strange spectacle of watching people carefully size up the pay phone then spaz out and attack it in a momentary seizure, the game was succeeding magnificently in its purpose of ingraining 1-800-CALL-ATT into the brains' of those playing the game. Having recently spent some time photographing a group of middle-school kids on field trips around the Boston area, I couldn't help but notice that every pay phone we passed, the kids would stop and call 1-800-CALL-ATT or 1-800-COLLECT (MCI's equivalent). They were living proof of the effectiveness of collect calling ad campaigns.

The guy (name also withheld) working the CALL ATT booth spoke to me while constantly being interrupted by people eager to become "The Fastest Fingers in the West" asking how the game worked. He told me that the format of the X-Games was stretched out way too long and it needed "more events, and less commercial stuff." On any given day, only two or three actual competitions took place during nine hours of festivities, so specta-



tors spent much of the day watching competitors practice, visiting the sponsors' booths, or saving good seats in the stands and watching the seemingly endless loop of commercials play on the Jumbotron televisions.

The CALL-ATT dude concluded his interview by saying the X-Games represents "capitalism at it's best" with an overwhelmed look on his face. I had another CALL-ATT employee, this one passing out free stickers, echo her fellow employee's attitude, telling me "advertising is America" with a defeated tone in her voice. In spite of this, when asked his opinion about advertising at the X-Games, one of the security guards told me with a cavalier attitude that "commercialism is just part of America." This kind of difference in opinion is indicative of the varying tolerance people have for advertising.

With the inception of events like the X-Games, the bar is being raised as to how large a role advertising can play in a cultural event. The creating, driving, and sustaining force for the X-Games is advertising. While most of the people at the X-Games readily accepted the advertising glut as a necessary aspect of the games and I do not pretend to think that the X-Games could exist without some form of corporate sponsorship, I still found it troublesome how captivated people were by the advertising. There seemed to be an equal buzz in the air over the actual events, which were few and far between, and the marketing blitz, which was constant.

It is here that I must admit my slightly unethical journalistic approach to the X-Games. Before I even stepped into the official X-Games site at Pier 30 in San Francisco, I was looking to be critical of the corporate presence. Talking to spectators at the event, even though my interviews were designed to steer them into talking about negatively about the advertising present, I was usually met with a lack of interest in the subject. I couldn't decide if I should just lighten up and look at the X-Games with the same oblivious smile that Average Joe had, or should I hold onto my somewhat cynical awareness?

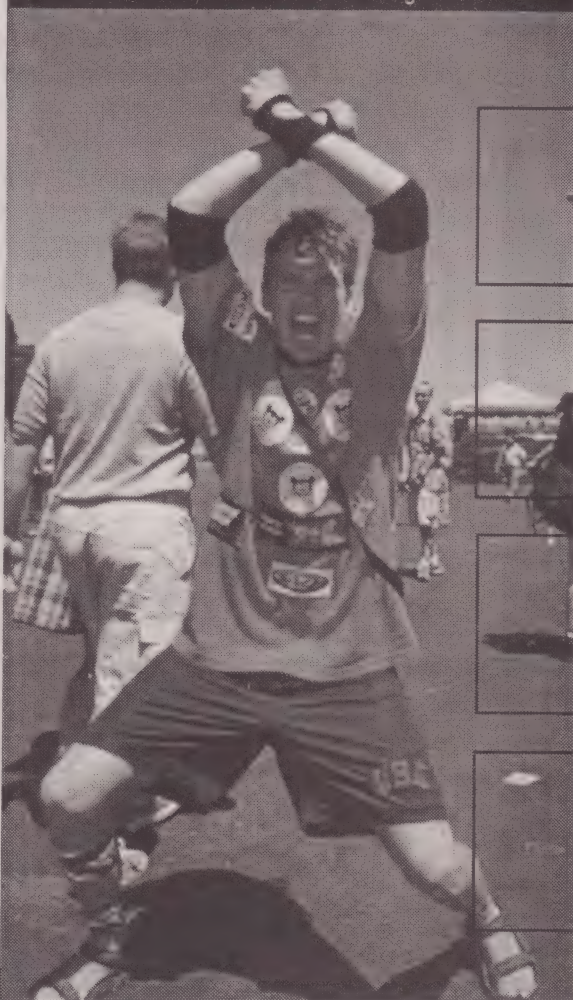
Ultimately, I left the X-Games having seen the good, the bad, and the ugly. There were moments of brilliance by competitors coupled with true excitement in the crowd and for a brief moment, all was good in the X-Games universe. Thirty minutes later, the competition would be over, commercials would be playing on the Jumbotron, and I found myself walking with sticky shoes

on the soda-encrusted pavement around the Mountain Dew area, watching young kids covered from head to toe in advertiser's stickers and peel-off tattoos pass by. As if to prove that the special moments of the X-Games were fleeting.

In recent years, commercialism in America has transcended traditional boundaries and is now becoming an all encompassing aspect of modern life. We now see advertising popping up in new areas all the time; on the internet, as part of the previews for movies, in gas stations and public bathrooms, on free T-shirts, stickers, and tattoos people wear, on clothing prominently displaying designer labels such as Nike and Tommy Hilfiger, from airplanes and blimps in the sky, and now in sporting events not sponsored by advertisers, but *created* by them.

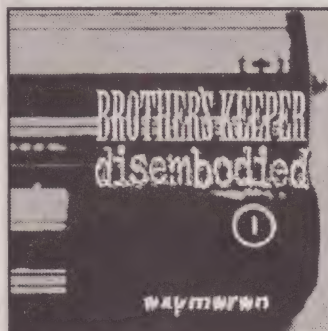
While the X-Games certainly provide a good time and should be spared over-analysis, they do represent a growing and alarming trend towards the increasing tolerance we have as a general public to advertising. I would only hope that some people will keep their eyes open to what we are being exposed to and refrain from blindly Doing the Dew.

Believe it or not: this is Arlo Guthrie's grandson.



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DISEMBODIED / BROTHER'S KEEPER

"Oxymoron" Split 10"/MCD (TK23)

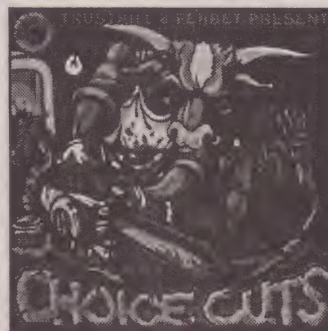
Your favorite posi-rockers from Erie, PA, team up with your favorite metalheads from Minneapolis, MN, to bring you the most anticipated split of the year. Three brand new tracks from each band, each a paradigm of their own unique sound. Prepare for the Quicksand cover by Disembodied, and the Danzig cover by Brother's Keeper. Absolutely each band's best material to date, proving why each has gained so much popularity over the last couple years. Although each band is the polar opposite of one another, you just gotta' love both of them for doing what they both do so well. Fans of all types of hardcore will appreciate this little treat. (6 songs)



NORA

"The Neverendingyouline" CDep (TK22)

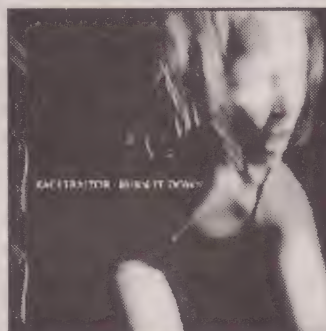
Trustkill's best friends from Jersey crank out their most aggressive and catchy release to date. A little less wandering than previous releases, but more brutal, heavy, and extremely intense. They have been compared to Botch, Turmoil, and Endeavor, but deliver their own unique blend of hardcore, metal, and punk rock. Ultra emotional lyrics and screaming fused with super tight guitar riffs that have unexpected changes and tempos. If you've liked their previous two releases, you are sure to love this new CD, and if this is your first Nora experience, it is destined to be a notable one. Recorded at Trax East. (5 songs)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Choice Cuts" CD \$5 post paid in the U.S. (TK20)

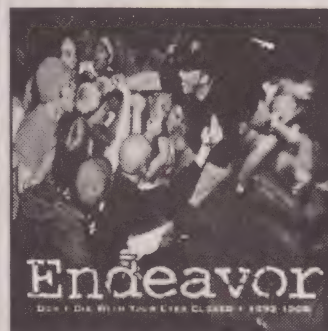
Specially priced Sampler CD of Trustkill & Ferret bands. All the best cuts from Harvest, Torn Apart, Brother's Keeper, Picturesque, Dillenger Escape Plan, Nora, For The Love Of, Ex Number Five, Despair, Rancid, Endeavor, Burn It Down, SeventyEightDays, Racetractor, Turmoil, All Chrome, Stretch Armstrong, Disembodied, SkyCameFalling, and Another Victim. All your favorite hardcore bands of the 90's on one cheap-ass CD, how can you go wrong? The best way to sample all the greats off these two dazzling record labels. 73 minutes and 51 seconds of excellent and dynamic music. **FREE** w/ orders over \$10. (24 songs)



RACETRACTOR / BURN IT DOWN

"Make Them Talk" Split MCD (TK18)

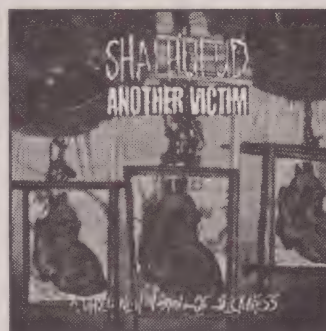
Stirring up controversy is what each of these guys do second best. But the best thing they do is write intense political hardcore in the Midwest style we've all come to love. Each band offers three new songs each, which turns into a Chicago vs. Indianapolis deathmatch of who can furnish the most vicious attack on your senses. Racetractor has gotten phenomenally more angry and aggressive, while Burn It Down has achieved a more polished and dynamic sound. Lyrically, RT and BID are scores above most hardcore/metal bands of today with their political and spiritual approach. Very different, very intense. (6 songs)



ENDEAVOR

"Don't Die With Your Eyes Closed" CD (TK19)

No doubt one of the most talked about and esteemed bands from the 90's. Endeavor has just been inescapable all across the hardcore scene in the past seven years. This CD includes the Ferret 7", the Happy Days 7", the Conversion album, a slew of compilation tracks, and three brand new tracks previously unreleased! Most songs have been remixed and remastered and sound incredible. And we are pleased to offer Trustkill's first enhanced CD, because this release contains an 8 minute Quicktime video full of live footage from their last two shows, and interviews too, playable on a Mac or PC. (23 songs, 1 video)



SHAI HULUD / ANOTHER VICTIM

"A Whole New Level of Sickness"

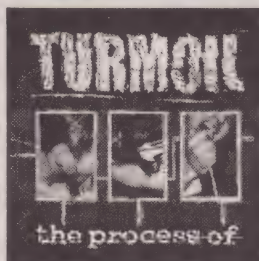
Split 7"/CDep (TK16)
The title of this record gives you an idea just how severely heavy and aggressive these two bands can play. Each band packs a punch with brand new songs each in their own fashion. Another Victim kicks in with brutal political SxS style hardcore/metal from Syracuse, and Shai Hulud rocks the technical side of hardcore/metal with personally anguished lyrics. Both bands claim these new tracks are their best to date, and you'll see why when you take a listen. Check out the "Boiling Point" cover and the "Anesthesia" cover on this recording, they are absolutely devastating. (6 songs)

also available and relatively new

BROTHER'S KEEPER
"ForeverNeverEnding" CD



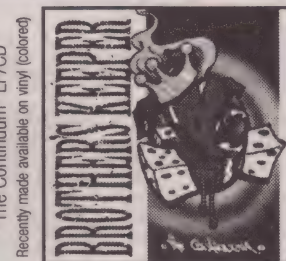
TURMOIL
"The Process Of" LP



HARVEST
"Transitions" CD/7"



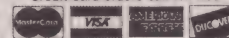
BROTHER'S KEEPER
"The Continuum" LP/CD



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Europe	\$5.00	\$13.00	\$13.00	\$8.50	\$10.50	\$12.00	\$15.00	\$17.00	\$32.00	\$37.00	\$8.00
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email:
hydr@mail@aol.com.

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release in europe

coming soon: "in these black days" 2xcd comp w/neurosis, coalesce, isis, cave in, botch, goatsnake, soilent green, eyehategod, etc.

Marilyn Manson and Columbine Killings

By now everyone in America knows the story of the two deranged Colorado boys who slaughtered kids left and right at their school one afternoon. This particular event has unleashed waves of controversy surrounding violence and child rearing in America. Although violence connected with schools are nothing new in the media— we have the eighties to thank for that— it is only recently that systematic attacks have taken place by students against other students in schools as far away as Alaska. These killings are not random shootings, and cannot be pinned on students who hail from “the ghetto.” Instead, many of the recent incidents have involved ordinary, albeit sadistic, kids from middle-class homes in middle America. The Columbine High School killing is not unique in that it was planned and organized, instead it was merely a massacre on the grandest scale and therefore attracted more attention than other similar killings around the country.

What is it about the town of Littleton that drove the nation into a frenzy of hysteria and panic; a place where everyone searched for answers about what kind of environment could produced such psychopathic boys? Is it that Littleton is in what is often called the “Heartland” of America? Is it the fact that Littleton is not, as many people would like to believe, a ghetto of any sort? Instead, Littleton is a relatively affluent suburb. Most people do not associate the suburbs with traumatized kids, much less violence. Rather, suburbs are often constructed and maintained with the sole purpose of removal from the violence often associated with cities.

There is, however, more to the case than just cut and dry topics like violence in middle-America. For instance, the two boys involved in the killings seemed to have rather strange lifestyles. They wore all black, specifically black trench coats; collected and stored an arsenal of weapons in their basement, under the noses of their parents; and listened to (heaven forbid) Marilyn Manson and the “shock rock” associated with him. This type of behavior— with the possible exception of their musical tastes— is not often associated with suburbia or middle-America. What I want to examine in this article is why the media would be more attracted to the popular culture tastes of these two boys than to subjects like gun collecting or unacceptable child rearing practices. My goal in the matter is to help show that when one examines the hyper publicized lifestyles of the two boys who committed the atrocities one can connect why the American public was so surprised that such events could take place in an ordinary town like Littleton.

What is it about Marilyn Manson that so attracted Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris to line their bedroom walls with his posters and adorn suicide notes with his lyrics? In other

words, why would these two boys use Mr. Manson's music as a soundtrack to the most atrocious killing of the year (at least, in middle America)? Perhaps, the answer lies in Marilyn Manson's physical appearance. The man is emaciated to the point of modelesque femininity, his favorite book is the Satanist's Bible; his music in many ways embodies the Satanist's Bible by using themes of the cosmic loneliness of man and inherent betrayal of human kind; he has a demonic appearance, using makeup and various costumes to make himself look like a freak. I guess, what I am wondering, is why would anyone, much less teenage killers, find solace in Manson's work? Perhaps we can look to the suicide note of the killers to find answers.

In the two boys' manifesto/suicide note, they made common references to killing those that had picked on them and made their lives a living hell. Namely jocks, cheerleaders, and others who have no trouble fitting into society. Although the note made no reference to explaining why the boys targeted ethnic minorities in addition to jocks, this may be a clue as to why two people who felt this way about their peers would look to Manson. For instance, Manson's music and the topics therein probably would not appeal to someone who felt accepted by society and their school as it would to someone who considered him/herself and outsider or victim of society. I am certain that Pearl Jam or Stone Temple Pilots are far more accepted in the fraternity systems and football programs of schools across America than Marilyn Manson. I mean, look at the early nineties when grunge was at its height. In that case, it was the bored, complacent youth of America, that felt the need for a young uprising to take place, who most accepted Kurt Cobain's music lock, stock, and barrel. In my opinion, the frat-boys of America merely liked the hard edge of Nirvana's music and flannel shirts that came back into style, instead of Cobain's message of disassociation from society. Perhaps, Mr. Manson's music is a throwback to the way kids were feeling in America in the early nineties, albeit a lot harsher and more blunt.

Another part of Manson's music which many impressionable kids may find appealing are Manson's repeated references to betrayal (or the looming threat thereof). Everyone who has ever made it to age 16

understands that sometimes life does not go as we planned and people are not as idealistic as situation comedies would like us to believe. The Satanist's Bible is full of talk like that. So, two kids who wore all black trench coats, hated minorities, and had ineffectual parents may, in addition to feeling like outcasts, feel that anyone who was not like them had betrayed them. I am sure that Klebold and Harris felt some sort of Messianic mission was given to them by the Messiah (or anti-Christ depending on your view): Marilyn Manson. I am also certain that Klebold and Harris were under the impression that their massacre at school was something that was beneficial to society. Almost a societal cleansing if you will.

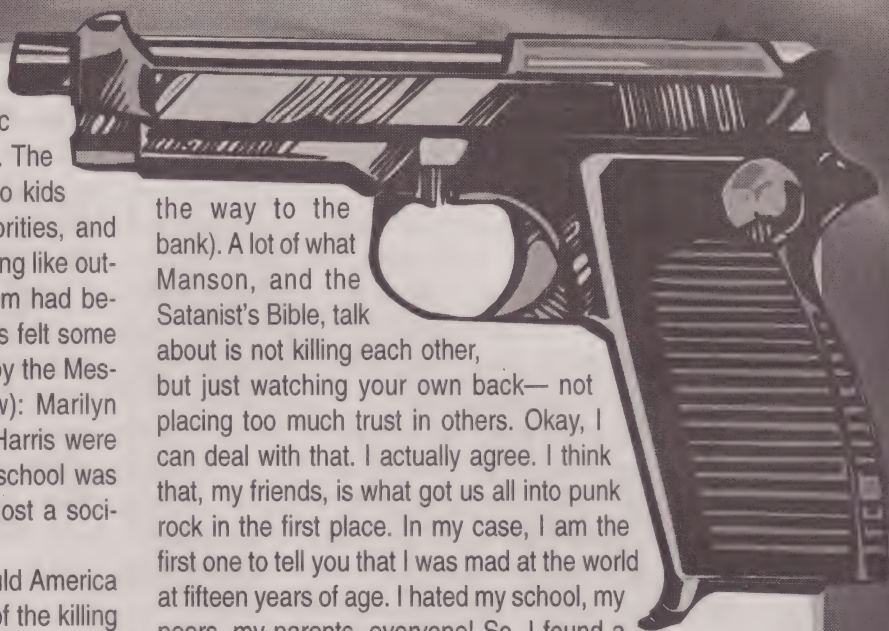
Back to the subject at hand: why would America become so enraptured not only in the details of the killing or the backgrounds of the parents, but also what type of culture Klebold and Harris patronized? Furthermore, would America have been so enraged if instead of Marilyn Manson posers on their walls, the two boys had had Creed, Britney Spears, or Blink 182 posters. Probably not. The reason is simple. America likes a scapegoat, but it does not like to place blame in difficult places. In other words, the American public is not willing to examine society as a whole and see what parts of our system are morally bankrupt. For instance, America is not willing to see the perspectives of Harris and Klebold. Perhaps they were making a profound statement in their actions, saying that the kids they went to school with treated them like shit and had no tolerance for their peers who were not linebackers or on the drill team. Probably not.

But, the point is that, America is not willing to make those difficult decisions that may affect our ways of life, thus creating a healthy and happy society for us all.

If you are wondering why I brought this article into a magazine that most often deals with issues involving punk rock, well, just hear me out. Harris and Klebold were definitely outsiders in the most potent sense. They definitely were mad at the world and had no idea how to attack the system in a peaceful, not to mention legal, way. So they lashed out in the way they thought their idol had told them to: violence. Now, I have read many interviews with Manson, and if there is one thing I can tell you about the man, it is that he is very intelligent, incredibly articulate, and fully aware of the type of kid who frequents his concerts (and he is laughing all

the way to the bank). A lot of what Manson, and the Satanist's Bible, talk about is not killing each other, but just watching your own back— not placing too much trust in others. Okay, I can deal with that. I actually agree. I think that, my friends, is what got us all into punk rock in the first place. In my case, I am the first one to tell you that I was mad at the world at fifteen years of age. I hated my school, my peers, my parents, everyone! So, I found a dedicated community of like minded individuals in the East Bay who felt the same way I did and were headstrong enough not to ignore their opinions. In hardcore, I find it even more. I mean, how many times have you heard the word unity thrown around at a Youth of Today or Gorilla Biscuits show. I think that is the beauty of punk rock. We as punks are concerned enough with our friends and relations to give them a healthy familial environment to take their aggressions out in. I can't tell you how much better I feel after jumping around seeing Fifteen for an hour than beating the shit out of the jocks at my school. In some way, punk rock is like therapy. That's it. Punk rock is admitting that life sucks and that we're all outsiders and that we're not just going to lay down and die. No, we're going to fight for what we believe in.

I think I've gone on long enough. In summary, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold did not have the type of support from their friends or families that I for one am lucky enough to have. So, they reacted in the way their fucked up minds thought was the only alternative, by killing anyone who did not wear a black trench coat or hate jocks. I am the first one to tell you I hate jocks, but I am also the first one to tell you that what these two boys did was wrong and totally stupid and I feel that America needs to undertake some major introspection to find out why a wave of school-killings in middle America is taking place. I say the answer is not in rejection of those who are different than you, but instead in understanding their perspective and perhaps seeing what valid points they might have. Thus, we can change society effectively to make a healthier society for us all.





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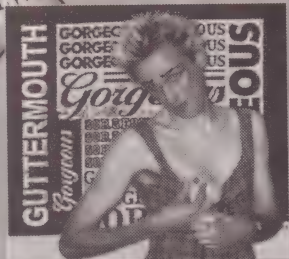
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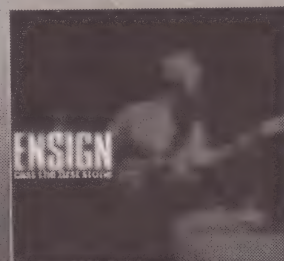
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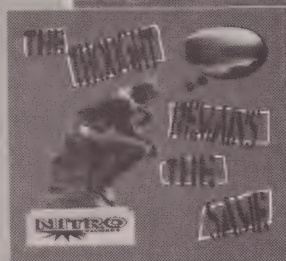
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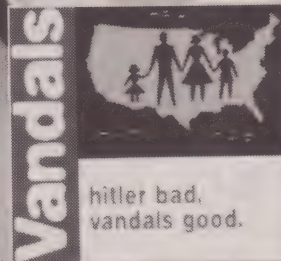
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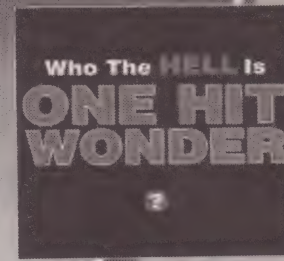
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The Nazi Next Door

by Dan Frantic

I once read in a friend's zine, and I would be hard-pressed to disagree, that "everybody loves a good skinhead story." While I would hardly consider my various run-ins with skinheads – and by this I mean skinheads of the thuggish bonehead variety, not the vast majority of non-violent, non-racist skinheads who must live with being unfairly grouped alongside Nazis – to be a badge of honor, there is certainly a fascinatingly lurid appeal to skinhead stories, a sort of "I've been to the edge and now I'm back to tell about it" quality to the various fracasés and near-miss confrontations that I've been through. It's no secret, of course, that I'm Jewish, and therefore it's understandable that I feel deeply antagonized by a group of people whose philosophy centers around killing people like me. Everybody I know, regardless of ethnicity, feels the same way I do. Even my friends who are non-racist skinheads, while they fiercely defend the integrity of the skinhead movement, abhor the presence of racist and violent-minded individuals in their midst.

But passively disapproving of racists and taking concrete actions against them can often be quite different. The book "Hitler's Willing Executioners," by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, points out that it was not only the SS policemen and members of the Nazi party – who, it should be noted, did not constitute a majority of the German people – who were to blame for the horrors of the Holocaust. It was also the "ordinary" Germans who lent their implicit approval through their inaction in the face of such unthinkable evil. It is understandable, although saddening, that many of these German citizens had to suppress their intuitive desires to cry out against the injustices surrounding them because the German national sentiment against Europe's Jewry and other "undesirables" was so powerful. Today, however, the public zeitgeist is far less overtly racist, and while I think there is plenty of institutionally embedded racism in our everyday lives, we certainly don't live in an era in which people would be killed or taken away to jail for speaking out against the presence of prejudice and hatred in their community. Nowadays it's relatively safe to announce our disapproval of Nazis, particularly when we're in the comfort of our own homes or in the company of people we know to be reasonable and even-headed. But imagine walking right up to a skinhead – a skinhead bigger and more inclined towards violence than you are – and telling him the same

thing. Convictions be damned; suddenly everything has become a little more difficult.

My friend Heather, who is half Asian, lives across the Bay from me in a neighborhood that, except for her and her housemates, is entirely black. Although she gets along with her housemates, they're not particularly close – it's more of a "friend-of-a-friend" situation in which everybody living there is doing so because they need a place to stay and they've been able to find a couple other people who are willing to help pay the rent. Heather never has had any trouble with her roommate, although she says he acts rather boorish and thickheaded sometimes. No big deal – plenty of people have horror stories about their roommates, and if the worst thing about this guy is that he's a bit slovenly, well, it's not a criminal offense.

But the other day Heather discovered something rather disturbing. Her roommate, who is 30, has extensive tattoos depicting various Nazi insignias. Amid all the skulls and daggers and usual quasi-macho tattoo imagery, there's an SS symbol, an iron cross, and something that, according to Heather, looks dangerously like a swastika. Because they're mostly on his torso and upper arms, Heather didn't notice them until recently, and at first she didn't feel that it was too huge of a problem, because he told her that he got the tattoos years ago and regrets them quite a bit. But if he regrets them so greatly, wonders Heather, why hasn't he made the effort to get them removed or cover them up? Why does he still wear short-sleeve shirts that display them prominently? Why, for God's sake, is there a Skrewdriver poster up on his wall?

I've never met the guy, but I have a hunch. If he says that he regrets getting the tattoos, then I believe him. He probably regrets deciding to emblazon his ideals on his sleeve because he's realized the social stigma that Nazism carries. Because of his tattoos, he probably has trouble getting hired and he's in danger of being insulted or attacked by people who disapprove of him. He's shut quite a lot of doors for himself by painting himself with such hateful symbols. But does this mean that he's rethought the ideologies that stand behind those symbols? Does the fact that he regrets his tattoos mean that he also regrets having been racist? That Skrewdriver poster on the wall says *no*. And I say to Heather: get out. Get the hell out.

It's not that easy, though. If this guy really has re-

thought his mistakes, then maybe Heather leaving is teaching him the wrong message: once a Nazi, always a Nazi. This logic, which mirrors the logic behind America's ludicrously inept prison system (once an offender, always an offender), flies in the face of everything we've been taught about forgiveness and reconciliation. If this is true, then maybe all the conciliatory efforts made by the sons and daughters of SS officers and Holocaust victims are for naught. And maybe the United States has no duty to recompense Native Americans for the horrible things we've perpetrated upon their people.

Have you ever heard of the Hiroshima Maidens? In the aftermath of World War II, it was learned that a number of Japanese women who had been hideously disfigured by the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were living as societal outcasts because of their grotesque looks. Many of them were forced to wear masks or were unable to go out in public. After the war, a group of surgeons (who, as I recently learned, counted a distant cousin of mine among their ranks) brought twenty-five of the worst-injured women to America and performed free reconstructive plastic surgery on them, giving them back many opportunities that the bomb had taken away. I think there's two lessons to be learned from this. The first is obvious: having committed terrible acts, it's never too late to turn your life around. The second lesson has a specific relevance for Heather's housemate: if you regret having covered yourself with Nazi tattoos, there's nothing stopping you from getting them removed. And if there are currently a number of clinics who are willing to surgically remove gang tattoos for free, I'm sure there are also places that would be more than willing to remove swastikas for a nominal fee. Is it physically painful? Well, yeah. I'm sure it is. I guess that's the price you have to pay for doing such an idiotic thing in the first place.

But this is all assuming that Heather's housemate feels bad to begin with, a shaky presupposition at best. There is, indeed, quite a fair likelihood that he continues to hold racist values, albeit in a more subdued fashion. But the fact is that, Nazi or no Nazi, the lease to the apartment is in his name. And if Heather challenges his values, she may find herself out of a place to live. For a working college student, let me tell you, that's a very scary thing. Never mind the fact that this guy, who is predisposed towards violence already, could very easily do some very cruel things to Heather. So Heather is in an extremely tricky position: she has to wholeheartedly condemn her housemate's racist values yet not alienate him as a person, engaging him in an active discussion over *why* he is racist and debunking his fears and paranoid, rather than antagonizing him and putting him in a defensive mode that will prohibit him from

rationally reconsidering his views. And all the while, Heather has to be careful to look out for her own well-being – and have the courage to find herself a safer and healthier living environment if it turns out that her housemate is irrevocably set in his ways. It's a situation I don't know if I would be comfortable with; having never had a face-to-face talk with a Nazi, I have doubts as to whether I could find the composure to address him as a fellow human being rather than either slap him in the face or get up and walk away. I'll be interested to see how Heather will handle the situation, but of course ultimately the choice is hers – the best I can do is offer my advice and my moral support, because I'm sure the confrontation won't be pretty.

Of course, racism comes in many forms. As a human being, and a flawed one at that, I am well aware that I may be prejudiced in certain ways. I think that everyone is racist to a degree; it's part of the human mental process to stereotype and lump people into groups, a sort of cognitive shortcut that frees us from having to judge each person we meet on an individual, objective basis. It's a given that we're all a bit prejudiced, but obviously Nazism and white supremacy are in a league of their own. This month alone there have been two major anti-Semitic hate crimes in California, a synagogue burning in Sacramento and a recent shooting at a Jewish nursery school in Los Angeles, and I'm also reminded of the horrible killings that have occurred recently in Peoria, Illinois and Jasper, Texas. Hate is on the rise in America, fueled by the vitriolic rhetoric of the far Right and the prevailing "gun culture" that, although it has recently begun to come under attack in certain circles, nonetheless holds sway over a vast segment of the populace.

There are various ways to combat the hatred that is spreading like a rash over our country, but ignoring it and hoping it will go away is not the answer. Some organizations, like Anti-Racist Action, choose to fight fire with fire. But as far as I'm concerned, the "eye for an eye" mentality has been invalid and misdirected for centuries, as it can only serve to escalate tensions. I much prefer to fight fire with brains, because, idealist that I am, I believe that most racist people will be able to change their views once they are shown concretely that their prejudices simply aren't true. I'm not suggesting that you take your local skinhead out for lunch and have a pleasant talk about why the NAACP is so great over a milkshake at the local diner. But I am suggesting that if you know someone who has racist views, skinhead or otherwise, that you summon up the bravery to confront them about it. Be unapologetic in your criticism of their racism, but at the same time recognize that only by acknowledging them as people, rather than demonizing them, can you hope to bring them around to your way of thinking.

10 Records

that changed the way DAN thought about music...

Nirvana: "Nevermind" — Let's not be coy. "Nevermind" was my introduction to the seamy underbelly of rock music, and to this day I doubt any other record has been able to throw my musical tastes — and my entire world view — into such a radically different trajectory as this one did. At one point in my life, I would listen to Nirvana every single day as soon as I got home from school, and I wouldn't stop listening until it was time for dinner or my ears simply couldn't take it anymore. Feel free to debate which Nirvana record had



the greatest artistic merit, but it is undeniable that "Nevermind" shook the nation to the bone and served as a musical baptism for legions of teenagers like myself.

They Might Be Giants: "Flood" — If you don't count Chopin and Rachmaninoff, this is the first album I ever bought. It's not perfect throughout — the second side has as many throwaway songs as it has gems — but there is any other song in the world that's even half as catchy as "Birdhouse in Your Soul?" Or as delightfully weird as



"Particle Man?" This album taught me that music could be brilliantly creative and bizarre but also rock at the same time. I own nearly everything that TMBG has ever put out, and as far as I'm concerned, it's all genius.

NOFX: "Punk in Drublic" — In retrospect, this record may not quite be the masterpiece that I once thought it was. But back in the day, oh wow!!! "Punk in Drublic" was the soundtrack to my early teenage years, and I can't count the number of times that my friends and I would hoarsely shout along with the faux-operatic "My Heart is Burning" or the growled snarliness of "Punk Guy." Hell, I was so into the Jew-power anthem "The Brews" that I taught it to my rabbi. Even now, years later, I can quote every lyric from this album, verbatim.



It's that classic. There are ten billion bands that would probably give an arm and a leg to be as good as this, but the fact remains that there's only one NOFX, and this album represents the pinnacle of their work.

The Mr. T Experience: "Love is Dead" — Completely airy and vapid from beginning to end, "Love is Dead" is one of those albums that doesn't profess to offer up anything besides pure pop enjoyment. No politics, no emotional intricacy, no weird instruments or dissonant sounds or anything like that. Just the same few juicy power chords over and over, tuned to razor-sharp perfection and coupled with a beat so simple and rocking that you can't help but tap your toes. Of all the Lookout!-style pop-punk bands that were competing in an in-



creasingly glutted market, the Mr. T Experience was the only group that could take musical ideas as old as the Ramones and make them new and fresh.

The Gits: "Enter: the Conquering Chicken" — Less than a week after I picked this brilliant album by the Gits, I learned that their singer, Mia, had been raped and killed in cold blood, a crime that to this day remains unsolved. Mia's death was a loss to all of us, because it doomed the Gits, who were so full of amazing potential, to a life of obscurity. If any band never got the credit they deserved, it was the Gits. Mia's voice, growly and beautiful, resounds with so much urgency and strength that I still cry when I listen to this album. It's rough and rocking and powerful and poetic in a tragic way. Do yourself a favor and check it out.



Propagandhi: "Less Talk, More Rock" — This is one of the very few albums that has changed not only my musical views but my entire value system as well. Unlike most political records, which come across as being either preachy or impersonal, this album pulls off the difficult feat of being thoroughly radical yet deeply human. Couple this with adept musicianship, stop-on-a-dime guitar work, excellent production, and thought-provoking lyrics, and you have a record that not only breaks the formulas, it smashes them against the wall with a sledgehammer. This record convinced me to go vegetarian, painted a vivid picture of our society's political evils, and reaffirmed my faith in punk music. Not bad for a little piece of plastic.



Sunny Day Real Estate: "Diary" — Still the best 'emo' record of all time, "Diary" is an emotionally intricate record that brought about an evolutionary leap in my musical tastes, from more simplistic, straight-ahead punk records to the more textured and interesting sounds of emo and indie rock. By now, of course, the musical styles perfected by Sunny Day Real Estate have been repeated ad nauseum by so many other groups that they have become hollow cliches, but on "Diary" the singing is so plaintive and the melodies so hauntingly beautiful that the album sounds fresh and new every time I listen to it. As an added bonus, this has the coolest cover art of any record, ever. Period.



Iam: "L'Ecole du Micro D'Argent" — Iam is French. They are a rap group. So they've changed how I think

about music in the sense that, well, they're French. And a rap group. But aside from their novelty value (which, don't get me wrong, is rather significant) Iam has opened new doors for me by helping to break down my anglocentric musical preconceptions. Through Iam, albeit indirectly, I have discovered a stylistically diverse realm of international bands, from Brazil's Os Mutantes to Israel's Useless I.D. to Japan's Melt Banana. And since Iam, who count the Wu-Tang Clan among their elite legion of in-the-know admirers, are light years better than any American rap group, they're also living proof that, yes, brilliant and innovative music is being created outside the borders of the good ol' U.S. of A.



Belle and Sebastian: "If You're Feeling Sinister" — For years, I operated under the proviso that, as far as music was concerned, louder equaled better. Then all of a sudden comes along an album that is probably as quiet and reserved as anything I've ever heard. But, strangely enough, I can't stop listening to it. And every time I listen to it, I discover something new about it. After a gazillion listens, I think I'm sick of it, so I decide to not listen to it for a few days. These days end up being some of the most painful days of my life. So I put the record on again and ah, all is well with the world. This, my friends, is the mark of a truly excellent album.



Anything by the Smiths/Morrissey — Mock me if you will, but I hold the Moz very, very close to my heart, and in my opinion, pretty much everything he touches is golden (with a few notable exceptions, namely the atrocious "Southpaw Grammar"). Morrissey does the whole melancholy thing better than Franz Kafka and Oscar Wilde combined, and his music perfectly exemplifies how much beauty can be found in sadness. Yet Morrissey isn't above a little subtle jibing from time to time — take a listen to "Girlfriend in a Coma" and tell me if you think Morrissey is really, honestly upset that his girlfriend is about to croak. When you're listening to the Smiths, the irony slips in through the cracks instead of barging through the front door, and his ability to be both painstakingly sincere and wickedly deceptive has made Morrissey a permanent installation on my CD player.



10 Records

that changed the way ROSS thought about music.

Motley Crue: "Dr. Feelgood"— I know this sounds like a terrible album to change the musical life of a zine writer, but you've got to take it in context. I think I was in sixth grade when this record came out, and before this I had never bought any records seriously except for Warrant or something like that. This record--packed with hits like "Kickstart My Heart," "Ball and Chain," and of course "Dr. Feelgood"--started me on the road to liking more aggressive music that was less (not much less, though) concerned with the sexual frustration of glam, and more concerned with drugs and booze and



other topics that had a positive effect on my life. By the way, I don't own this record anymore. Nor do I own any of the tapes of the sexual escapades of the members of Motley Crue.

Black Flag: "First Four Years"— Ah, the first punk record I ever bought. My dad bought this record for me when I was 15 at a great record shop in San Francisco across from the restaurant at which my parents and I were dining that night. This record, of course, taught me that vocals did not have to be polished and manicured and guitars need not only play solos. When I first popped this disc into my new CD player, I like to think I was transformed immediately. But, way back in 1992, the



emotion was probably more along the lines of shock. I still own this record and will own it forever as it has all the classic pre-Rollins Black Flag stuff (which in my opinion is the best BF stuff).

NOFX: "Punk in Drublic"— I remember racing my sister to Reckless Records on Haight Street, after we had returned from a summer program to Israel, to see who could be the first to purchase Fugazi's "Red Medicine" and this record (although my sister will most likely deny the NOFX part to the death). I think that this disc really opened my eyes up to the vastness of punk and told me that there was a flourishing punk scene in my back yard. It also introduced me to a time I sometimes like to forget. In other words, this record prompted me to spend hundreds of dollars on Cali skate-punk records and merch for the next year or two. I remember driving around town with my friends with "The Brews" pumped to full volume, bouncing around my room in a desperate attempt to recreate the urgency of "Don't Call me White,"



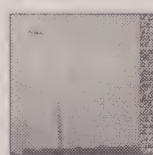
or starting the second band I would ever play in to the anthemic "Linoleum." I don't have this record anymore, but that's just because my friend Tracy scratched it and hasn't bought me a new one yet.

Minor Threat's Discography— Yeah, I know this is a pretty cliché album to say changed my musical tastes,

but it really did. I mean, for the first year and a half that I was into punk I only listened to old-school from the west coast. Suddenly I bought this album and I had a new direction in my musical patronage: a) east coast stuff b) straightedge punk c) hardcore d) an introduction to Dischord Records e) Ian Mackaye. If you even need to read why this is a good record, then I recommend you put this zine down and go to your local record store this minute!



Fugazi: "In on the Kill Taker"— This was the first Fugazi record I ever bought, which is arguably their most dynamic. I actually bought it on a whim when a friend of mine told me she heard that some guy from Black Flag was in it. Well, she was wrong, but some guy from Minor Threat was and still is in Fugazi. I think

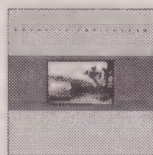


this record really opened my eyes to the idea that punk did not have to be blazing drum beats and super-fast palm muting to be good. Instead, punk could be slow, dynamic, and subtle and still maintain its poignancy.

Jawbreaker: "24 Hour Revenge Therapy"— This is simply one of the best records to ever come out of the Bay Area. I must admit, I didn't buy this disc but stole it from my sister instead. It was the most worthwhile theft I have ever made, because I have so many memories attached to "Jinx Removing," "Out-patient," and "Indictment." This record is lyrical genius if not one of the precursors to the whole emo craze that is sweeping the nation right now.



Texas is the Reason's ep on Revelation— You might find it interesting that I did not note their only full length, "Do you even Know who you Are." To put it simply, I like this record better. It rocks in that emo/hardcore type way. It really opened a lot of doors to me, especially when I moved to the east coast where the music scene is worlds apart from the west coast scene. After I bought this record, I got much more into the world of Revelation



Records as well as bands like Lifetime, The Promise Ring, and The Getup Kids. I still have this 3 song disc and even though I don't listen to it much anymore, I think it is the best stuff this short-lived band ever made.

Propagandhi: "Less Talk, More Rock"— Unfortunately the two times I've seen Propagandhi they were within a month of the release of their latest albums at the time. So, I was not as familiar with the songs on either record when I finally did see them live. I truly wish I had owned this record for longer than a week when I saw Propagandhi so I could know every word of every song

on this absolutely phenomenal piece of work. This disc truly changed the way I thought about sexuality, inter-gender relations, political awareness and activism, even consumption of animal products. Not only does this album rock, but as Dan says, this album is lyrical genius. In many ways, this album changed less my musical tastes and more the way I viewed the world I live in. "Less Talk, More Rock" makes me want to fight for the oppressed.



How many other records have made me feel that way? Not many. I still own this record, and I hope to always have this in my collection to remind me of the idealism I hope to always possess.

Elliott Smith: "S/T"— I bought this album about 5 years ago after my sister recommended that I learn about some really emotional music and forget about the skate-punk crap that dominated my collection back then. So, I went out and bought Elliott's second album and first on KRS. All I can say about this album is that there is a song on here for every occasion: despair, betrayal, jubilation, love making, etc. On most songs, there is nothing more than an acoustic guitar and the occasional snare drum or accordian, but the 12 songs on this disc are some of the most powerful tunes you will ever hear. I mean, listen to Elliott's amazing voice on songs like, "St. Ide's Heaven," "Alphabet Town," or "Coming up Roses" and you will see that you don't need blast beats and



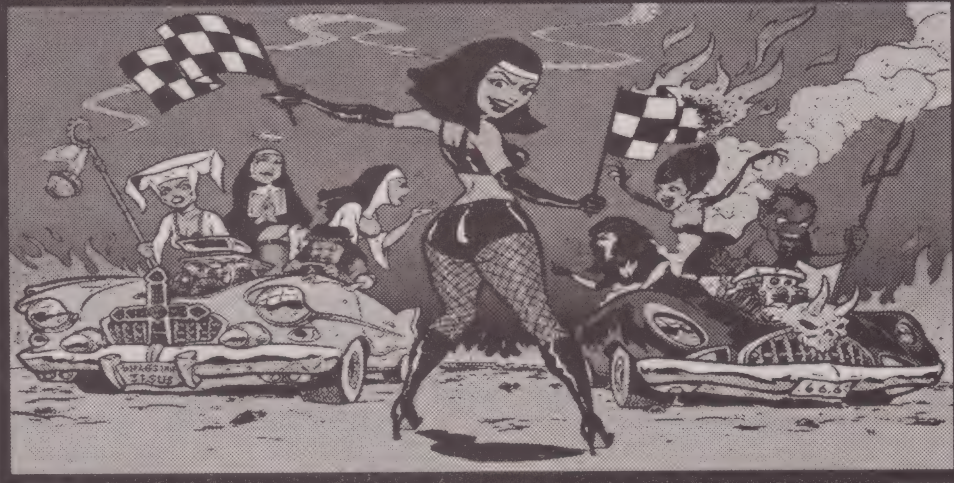
distortion pedals to make a truly amazing record. I have so many memories attached to this CD and I hope to have many more in the future.

The Clash: "London Calling"— My favorite band and my favorite CD. I remember reading Rolling Stone's "100 Best Albums of the Eighties" special and seeing that this CD was #1 on the list. And rightly so, for "London Calling" packs almost every type of musical genre onto this CD: punk, funk, ska, jazz, zydeco, pop-- it's all here. You've got psycho killers, Spanish freedom fighters, supermarket love stories, nuclear holocaust, rude-boy rock. I can't say enough good things about this record. Possibly the most innovative and inspiring record in my collection, the Clash's masterpiece opened up more musical doors for me than I ever thought possible. Okay,



okay, so I bought it 14 years after it came out. Does that mean it's any less daring and poignant? No. If you don't already own this then you're a piece of no good shite.

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Planes Mistaken For Stars

an interview by Dan

It's probably fair to assume that at least a portion of *Law of Inertia's* readership is unfamiliar with *Planes Mistaken for Stars*. After all, it is only recently that this Denver band, whose first touch of fame came with their track on Deep Elm's "Emo Diaries" compilation, has started to gain a higher profile. The recent re-release of their brilliant and underrated first album is cause for great celebration, and another EP on the way promises to be just as good if not better. *Planes Mistaken for Stars* may play heart-rending emo, but their music also contains a punky energy and vivacity that most contemporary indie rock bands can't hope to match. If you haven't heard them yet, then please, by all means, check them out.

Who am I talking to, what do you play, and what is your favorite cartoon?

I'm Garred and I play guitar and sing for *Planes Mistaken for Stars*. My favorite cartoon is probably *Spiderman* and *His Amazing Friends*. Actually I hear they're scripting a movie for it right now.

Garred, can you tell me a little bit about the history of the band and the move from Peoria to Denver?

Well, when I was 17 I started playing bass, and I was in a local band there called *Dismissed* for a long time. And then I ended up hooking up with Jamie and Matt, since we've been friends for like 9 years now. We've always kind of kicked around in local bands and whatnot. Then Matt went to recording school a few years ago, and when he got back we decided to play music a little bit more seriously and tour. I think there's nothing better than playing with your best friends and seeing the country. We played around Peoria, IL, and it was me, Matt, Mikey, and Aaron our first bass player. We played for about 6 months and then we recorded a 9 song CD. After that we went on a west coast tour with the *Blue Ontario* and a Midwest tour with a band called the *Kosabone Red*. Things ended up not working out with Aaron and Jamie became the bass player, and he was our roadie for some time. When we had been together for about a year and a half we decided to get out of Peoria since it's a cultural void.

What inspired you guys to move to Denver specifically?

It was a place I had been to, and my mom and little brother live in the area. We just thought it would be cool to get a core group of friends and get the fuck out of Peoria 'cause that was everybody's dream. The best people I've ever met in my life are from Peoria, IL, so I don't slag on it for that. I don't know, I guess if it wasn't for the fact that I grew up in such a cess-pool I never would have started playing music. At the same time I just wanted to get out of there and I guess we all felt that we were accomplishing something by leaving.

Were you a little bit scared to make the move on a band-relationships level?

Well, no I wasn't scared, 'cause we all wanted to do this. But, as close as I am with the band, people can flake on you at the drop of a hat. I was kind of scared they wouldn't like it here and want to go back to Peoria. It's a big step to leave

your whole past behind. But everything's worked out, and I knew that it would in the back of my mind. It was important—the move—to see if this was something we really wanted to do as far as playing music was concerned. By no means are we career musicians, by no means are we professionals. We don't take it so seriously that we're going to be snobs or anything. But we do take it seriously in that it's a very cathartic process and it's a very important thing to us—playing music, that is. In 10 or 15 years from now if kids are still listening to a *Planes* record and it touches them like *Black Flag* touches me now, then who cares what we did and where we went as a band... that's all that matters to me. I think that's the highest compliment you can be paid, to have the records you put forth be almost religion to somebody like, say, *Dag Nasty* is to me.

Do you think you've encountered a greater degree of musical snobbery in moving to a bigger city and playing out more often in places other than your home?

It's funny, I think I have an antenna for that sort of stuff. It's like every single band we play with has to be kind of snobbish and thinks our band is making some sort of musical *faux pas*, because we're not all worried about being musicians, or what the composition of our songs consists of, or whether *Steve Albini* would approve? (laughter) Lots of that look and feel snobbery of punk rock is sort of a joke to me. I think I run into it a lot, but that might just be my paranoia. Just 'cause we as a band are not trying to destroy the rules of punk or redefine what music is, I think people tend to think that we're not serious.


Well, it's interesting 'cause you guys don't really fit into that whole Midwestern sound. You sure don't sound like *Mineral* or the *Promise Ring*. I actually just read a review of you guys in some zine that called you "the midwest's answer to *Lifetime*."

I definitely like *Lifetime*, and I really like bands that I'm sure the guys in *Lifetime* liked, such as *Dag Nasty*, *Gorilla Biscuits*, etc. But, I think any vibrant music scene that gets a lot of attention there seems to be an avant garde. A lot of that is zines themselves, or hipster kids that have nothing better to do than sit in front of their computer. They don't know shit about bands, but they propagate rumors and comparisons that may or may not be true. It's like the first time I was in *San Diego* I felt totally out of place, 'cause unless you go to the *Locust* show and look like everyone else than you're a big loser. None of us wear high-water jeans or sweaters or do our hair all fancy, as I guess a lot of Midwestern "emo" bands are known to do. I'm sure if you get down to it all those guys here and in *San Diego* too are just rockers. (laughter) When it comes down to it, we're all involved in punk rock for the music. I mean, there are plenty of bands that people say are made up of complete dicks, yet they rock so people go see them. So in the end we're not paying \$6 to compliment their character, but their music.

Do you think that whole zine culture has a lot of influence over what is cool or what gets sold in punk rock?

Oh, totally. I mean, I've read a bunch of zines and talked to a bunch of kids who





talk shit about us merely 'cause we work with Deep Elm. It's silly 'cause a lot of kids, and zines in particular, think Deep Elm is not cool and therefore we aren't cool either, whether or not we rock. It's stupid, 'cause punk rock should be about dividing up the population, by sound or something as stupid as record label. That doesn't mean that everyband is exactly the same 'cause they're on Jade Tree or Deep Elm. A lot of that shit is kids building up a sort of mythology around a certain label. I mean, John from Deep Elm has been known to like a certain genre of music. But, that genre wouldn't be there if the kids didn't make it up themselves. A lot of people think that we're a stop/start/loud/soft band, 'cause a lot of kids think that's what Deep Elm is solely about. It's really not. There are some bands on Deep Elm that are geared towards that sort of style, but there aren't many similarities between us and, say, Appleseed Cast.

Well, part of Deep Elm's reputation—whether it's true or not—comes from the fact that people think they're a Christian label. Do you guys have religious affiliations?

That's pretty funny as well, 'cause when you meet us you will not find 4 more un-Christian dudes. (laughter) It cracks me up. A lot of people that like that label think they're Christian 'cause a few Deep Elm bands have a few Christian members. It's like an idea I want to shatter because I want people to dislike us or like us 'cause they think we're Christian. If people will or will not come see us 'cause of our beliefs or disbeliefs in God then that sucks. I don't subscribe to Christianity. I know some great people who are Christian, but I don't want to be like them in that way.

Has that caused any personal troubles with you and your relations with Deep Elm? I mean, does he appreciate the label's image?

Well, I don't even know if John's aware of it. (laughter) He is by no means a Christian. I mean, the first thing he shows you is his porn collection. (laughter) I don't really know what his personal philosophies are about God or Christ or whether space aliens are going to melt the world tomorrow. I do know that I don't think it's really an issue with him. I think it's especially funny that people think we're Christian 'cause on our new ep, the last song is about if there is a God, then I'll "fucking fight" him. The bottom line is that John cares about his bands and he will work his fucking ass off for you if you're on his label. I think a lot of people might get the wrong idea about John 'cause he is very business. One of the reasons we don't work exclusively with John is because he comes from a different background than us. I mean, we all grew up on DIY stuff like Black Flag and the Minutemen. John's work is truly a business and a very successful one at that. If he wasn't so business oriented and didn't watch where his money was going, then he couldn't have helped us get money to fix our van when it broke down on tour a while back. It's stuff like that that has turned Deep Elm into a great label.

I think that brings up the age-old discussion of what is the difference between being punk and making great punk records and actually being successful. I mean, everyone has their prejudice about which zine or label or distro is too corporate for them and why they don't patronize them. When it comes down to it everyone wants to make good music and put out good products and if they sell well, then that's fucking great!

What is success? Like look at Ricky Martin or Korn: are they successful 'cause they've sold 20 million records, and every girl on earth has their lunchbox? Or are we or a band like Cross my Heart successful even though we starve to death. We've sold like 2000 records tops, and we keep on doing it.

So what's your idea of success?

Well there's things I want to aim for. I mean, I want to go to Europe and Japan. I want kids to still have my records 10 years from now and still find them vital. But, really, I've already achieve success 'cause I moved clear across the country to a new life with my best friends and I rock out with them. There are people that have told us our music means so much to them. That, my friend, is success. It is not having cool shoes or a fucking Gibson SG. Success is making something that people find important. Success has nothing to do with how many records you sell. What happens next is in the hands of you and me. Whether punk rock fucking implodes on itself 'cause it's gotten too commercial, only time will tell. But, there will always be a need for a type of cathartic expression where kids can go crazy and scream their heads off and rock-the-fuck-out. It doesn't matter if you see the cool people at the show, or if you only go see the trendy bands. It doesn't matter if the music makes you want to cry about it, or if it makes you want to go burn down the police station. (laughter) I don't care. I just care about good times and making good music. Don't worry what Joan of Arc would think, just do stuff for yourself.

Emily Bodenberg: This is (Not just) a Zine Review

I've become far less actively political this year. Rallies, marches, even my beloved Food Not Bombs have conflicted with exams, essays, and the whole school rigamarole. General laziness has also been a factor inhibiting my participation in many activities I once embraced whole-heartedly. This seems to be a general phenomenon where I live. There are fewer people around me that I am inspired by. It seems that a wave of abulia has washed over my fair island, leaving a lot of kids in the local 'scene' listless and inactive, feeling so much but expressing so little. This inactivity is especially disconcerting to me when the kids that are out there, that are making themselves heard, have detrimental things to say.

A few months ago, on a visit to Montreal, I picked up a free zine with the title *Punk Associated* emblazoned across the front. I was curious to know what was going on in the city, and hoped to find the zine a representative piece of writing. What I found instead was more of a sounding board for one young man's ideas about what constituted "punk," and a venue for him to air out his sexual fantasies. I don't want to get into a long, drawn-out discussion of what punk means to me, but I have never associated it with being sexist (or misogynistic), ablist, racist, or advocating violence. What I read in the zine, which I initially thought might be satire (although devoid of any of the marks of intelligence necessary for such a feat, and without any clear purpose in using such a genre), angered me so much, but like so many other things lately, I put it on the proverbial back burner. I decided I would write a letter to the aforementioned literary genius, but time passes, and I temporarily forgot about the zine. When I found it the other day (in a post-Spring house cleaning blitz), all those feelings I had when I first read it came back, and I've decided to share them (along with some of his fine words) with all of you instead of him, because I imagine he would have little response to what I am saying here.

Dear Writer of PA:

I can't help but find it ironic that you urge others, if they are doing a zine for the "wrong reasons" to stop "polluting our scene with useless garbage" when you yourself seem eager to proliferate the garbage heap of your thoughts amongst your lovely readers. Your zine seems to firmly encapsulate what I would consider garbage: The dissection of women (are they "good enough" to be "worth" your writing about) or "chicks" in your lingo, and the apportioning of value to their various parts ("pussy," "massive cleavages," "lady lips" [ok, this one just sounds creepy]), references to women as "bitches," use of the word "gimp," differentiating between white and black women (as if this makes a difference when you've already firmly relegated them to roles as sex objects), etc. I'm not quite sure what your "scene" is, I just know that I certainly would not be comfortable or feel safe in it, especially after you divulge that the reason why you go to see some shows is because there are "all kinds of nice honeys there," the reason you associate with women, even if they are "livin' large," is because you want to get some action, or more colloquially, "get to see some pussy."

You seem to be tragically without that important verbal screening device necessary for true human interaction. Like a friend who once admitted to a sexual liason with a household pet during a game of truth-or-dare, or a relative who talks of astral planes, transmutations, and auraos at inopportune moments while family members hide expressions behind tea cups, I genuinely do feel sorry for you that you have shared your innermost thoughts with us. The dreams you have related about having sex with a stripper while being videotaped could be chronicled in a diary (have you thought about this?); as Built to Spill says, "no one cares what you dreamt about unless you dreamt about them," except I don't want to hear about your dreams at all, especially if they involve myself or my gender.

Your celebration of porn is also unfortunate, as I doubt it is a more egalitarian art porn you are applauding. I have never seen "German Buffet" and never will, but it seems to me that in your personal ideology, a woman is very much like a buffet. When you comment that a specific woman is "a really hot dish" this connection is further cemented. I imagine your ultimate sexual fantasy is one not overtly mentioned but alluded to: the opportunity to sample as many women as possible, and then discard them when finished. If you're so into buffets, my advice is to put on that "Raiders jacket" you so love to wear and head on down to the neighbourhood Red Lobster. I hear they have quite a spread. So, may I say back to you "learn your fucking history, punk," because this isn't a history of blatant sexism and patriarchal values. You may think I'm being overly caustic in my judgment of you and your writing, but we both obviously value freedom of expression. You have a right to say what you will, although it may seem like a tenuous right in your case, and I have the right to challenge it.

Most Sincerely,
Emily Bodenberg

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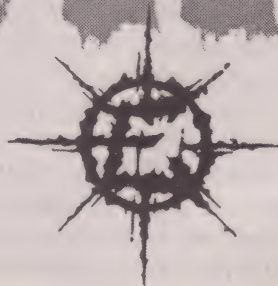
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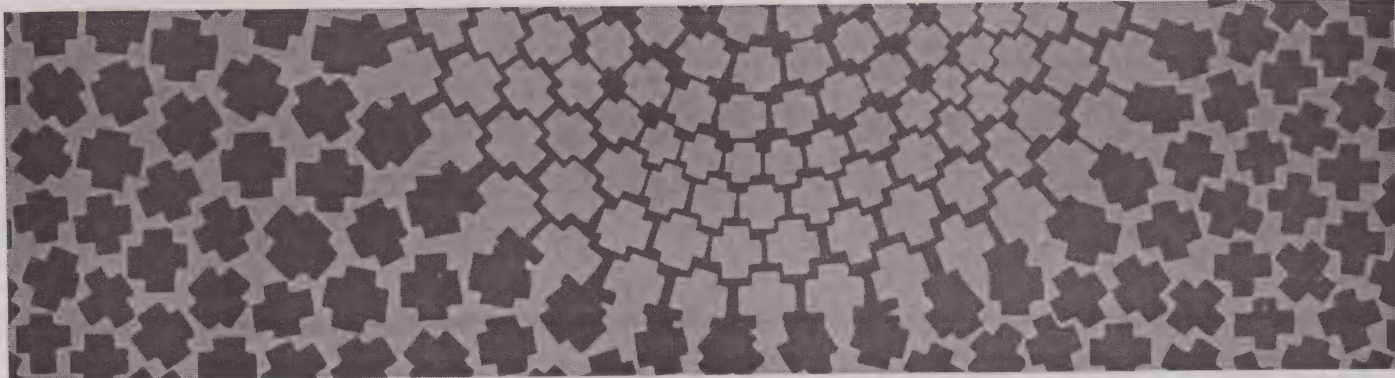
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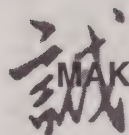
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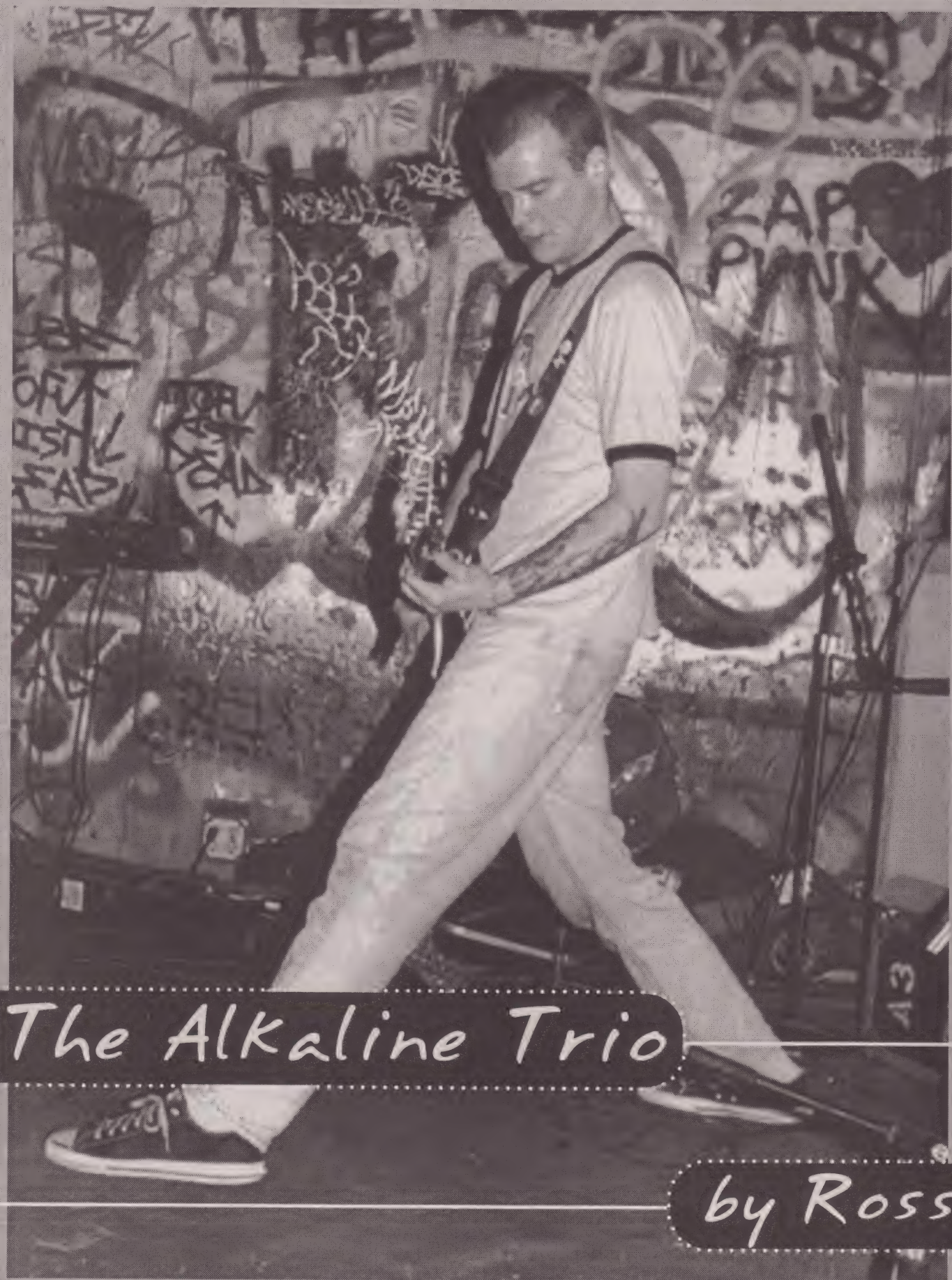
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The Alkaline Trio

by Ross

I first made contact with the great Alkaline Trio when I heard that members of Tuesday had formed a new band. Well, a member of Tuesday plays bass for the Alkaline Trio, who sound nothing like Tuesday. Nevertheless, I fell in love with their brand of driving, sincere punk rock. I later had contact with singer/guitarist, Matt, after I attempted to chase him down for about three months to give a song to my comp. I don't think they were originally going to give a song, but I guess Matt felt so bad that I had been trying so hard, so they recorded me a great cover of the Cure's "Exploding Boy." Their music embodies the reason I got into punk rock. So, when I heard they were playing in Berkeley at the same time I happened to be home for spring break, I hauled my butt over to the East Bay and was welcomed by hugs from the AT. So, we sat in their van and smoked cigarettes, and afterwards I felt I had just gained 3 new friends.

First Question: who's in the band, who plays what, and what was the first record that made you want to be in a band?

Dan: My name is Dan and I play bass guitar and sing. The first record I ever bought that made me want to be in a band was... I suppose... shit... I suppose it was 7 Seconds' "Ourselves," which is a weird 7 Seconds reference but that was the first one I bought, and I liked them. Then I bought other 7 Seconds stuff and then I really wanted to be in a band.

Matt: My name's Matt and I play guitar and sing. The first record I bought that made me want to be in a band was probably the Cult's "Electric" album. (laughter) 'Cause the song "Love Removal Machine" was the first song that I would actually lip sync and play air guitar to in privacy. It made me totally want to be in a band.

Glenn: My name's Glen and I play drums. When I was eight years old I bought Def Leppard's "Pyromania"....

Dan: Hell yeah!

Glenn: I used to air drum to "Rock of Ages." I think even then I wanted to be in a band really bad.

Matt: Amazing.

What makes a good rock band?

Dan: Not trying to do too much. Honesty, soul, good friends.

Let me further that question, what makes a good rock band to play in and what makes a good rock band to watch and listen to?

Matt: I think intensity in one way or another. Really mellow stuff like Belle and

Sebastian is really intense. It has nothing to do with them jumping around or screaming, but they just have a really good presence. Or a band like Fugazi who's just insane to watch. It's like a blessing to see a band like that.

Glenn: It forces you to react.

Dan: Bands that you can sort of tell that in some way or another mean it. Whether or not they're making money, you can tell they're not doing it just to make money. They're not doing it to please anyone but themselves. I think that's important.

So I hear you guys are moving from Chicago to Oakland.

Matt: Hopefully. Actually we were supposed to be on the Plea for Peace tour and we were talking about moving as early as next month 'cause the tour got pushed back. We all just love it out here, it's so relaxing. We've all been out in Chicago for so long and the punk scene out there is really cool, independent music out there is really good.

Dan: It's a cool town too, but as far as scenery it's just way prettier out here. It's almost utopic out

here, 'cause it's relaxing and exciting. So

we're planning on it, but as of

now we're just

trying to work on

finances.

You guys don't mind that the scene out here is kind of at a lowpoint?

Glenn: We don't really know much about it to tell the truth.

Dan: We're more moving for the weather and the fact that we like it here. We're on tour most of the time so we just want to come home to a nice place and Chicago weather isn't very good most of the

year. I like it out here

'cause there's sun.

Glenn: We all grew up in Chicago so we're ready to move on.

Dan: As far as the scene goes,

I think it would

be cool to enter

another scene, whether it's good or at a lowpoint.

Matt: As far as the Bay Area scene being a little less exciting then it used to be, well, the Chicago scene wasn't looking too hot a few years ago. I

mean, there were all these

rad bands, but people were really tired of everything that was going on. People get burnt out all over the place. Maybe if we come here we can help revitalize it.

Dan: As we said, we're not moving 'cause of the scene. I think that the Chicago scene right now is really booming and it's really exciting. We've got a good thing going out there— cool friends, good fans— it's definitely other reasons that we might leave.

Glenn: Even if we did move we'd be heading back there a lot.

You guys are playing a ska show tonight with a bunch of your label-mates of Asian Man Records. Of course, Asian Man is mostly known for ska. You guys sure aren't ska. So when you play these type of shows what's the reaction?

Dan: It's getting old. I used to be in Slapstick as you know, which was a ska band. We broke up 'cause none of us were listening to ska. It's not what we were into, it's definitely not what this band is into. A lot of the bands we play with we play with 'cause we're friends with them. And, a lot of the ska bands we play with we do like, but it's starting to become something we know we shouldn't be doing anymore, 'cause it's not we want to do anymore.

Glenn: This is our first time to the west coast, so we're just happy to be playing, you know?



Maybe next time we come through we'll play with different bands that are more our speed.

Matt: MU330 is a band that I think gets lost in the mix of ska bands, 'cause I think we actually go really well with them. They have that silly side, and they also have the carnival stage presence side, but their music is so serious and so well done that I think they get lost in the mix of a ska band, when I think they're actually a really good rock band. It's great to tour with them, but it's too bad for us that most of the kids who are into them are ska kids and aren't interested in our realm of music.

So when a hardcore kid, or a punk, or an emo kid sees your CD at a store and sees the Asian Man logo on it, do you think they have any preconceived notions before they listen to the record?

Glenn: Maybe, but it's nice to dispel those things. It's nice that we're a different band on this label that is mostly known for its ska.

Matt: It's fun to confuse people, especially when we have a working relationship with Mike Park.

Dan: If someone's not going to buy our record 'cause of what label it's on then fuck 'em!

Matt: Fuck 'em!

So you guys are perfectly cool with the baggage that comes along with the Asian Man logo?

Matt: Oh yeah. We love Mike. We love what he's all about. He's a business man, he runs a business, but he does it more honestly and with more integrity than most people. I think the label is definitely an independent label, he did this all himself, he puts out great records. To me, I would rather be on a label that everyone might have preconceived notions about than be on a label that is ran by people who are just business acquaintances.

Glenn: Everything's on our terms.

Matt: Yeah. With Mike it's a handshake, we don't have to sign any bullshit papers. Mike said, 'I like your band,' we said, 'we like your label.' So we shook his hand and he puts out our records and we're all good friends. We don't want to work with a label where we have to sign anything to be on it, 'cause that's a sign that they don't really care about the music. It's not to say that there's anything wrong with making money, 'cause when you're selling tons and tons of records it's more necessary to sign contracts. But we like the hand-shake then hug agreement with have with Mike so much!

Okay, Dan, I've got a question for you. Is Tuesday broken up and if not is this a side-project or is Tuesday a side-project or what?

Dan: Tuesday is not broken up. I try to avoid having a side-project at all costs 'cause I don't think it's fair to anyone, but right now my main thing is the Alkaline Trio. Tuesday hasn't practiced or written any songs or played a show in quite a long time. It's too bad that Tuesday hasn't done anything for a long time, but we're all involved with other stuff. We're just going to see what happens. We might feel the urge to start practicing more often but it seems like everyday we just get more and more busy.

Do you miss lead singing?

Dan: Not so much. I miss having main creative control like I did in Tuesday. I wasn't by any means dictator in Tuesday, or I'm not, but I wrote all the songs, and the other three guys would just give pointers. So, I miss writing the songs like in Tuesday, but I don't miss being the singer. But, in this band it's probably a little bit better 'cause we all put in 33 and a third percent into the writing.

Why didn't you guys play the song "Cop" tonight?

Matt: We were going to play it, but we didn't have enough time.

That's cool, I guess I forgive you. (laughter) What's the deal with you guys and cops?

Matt: We saw some cops today.

Glenn: Holy shit that was awesome.

Dan: We were sitting in People's Park in Berkeley and there were these two sketchy guys hanging out behind us and the cops started walking up to us and then went to the sketchy people behind us. They started searching through their stuff and all these little rocks of crack just fell out. The cop asked the dude for his jacket and right when the dude handed it to them he fucking split. (laughter) One of the cops ran after him when the dude jumped over a fence. So the cop starts climbing after him and just ate shit right in the road. He hit the ground and it was hilarious.

Matt: I have nothing against cops. I hate people who just blame all their problems in the world on cops. It's like, a cop is a really easy example of someone on a power trip and some people refuse to actually take credit for anything themselves.

What about the fat cop in the song?

Matt: There was one cop who I got a speeding ticket from when I went to visit my folks outside of Chicago. He pulled us over and he acted like it was the invasion of Poland. He just screamed at me. I almost started laughing it was so ridiculous. The song is about people like that who just use their power trips to intimidate ordinary people who commit some minor fucking offense.

Glenn: We were bike messengers in Chicago for a while and Matt had a couple of unfortunate run-ins with the Chicago bike police.

Matt: They claimed to be protecting the people of Chicago, but really their main goal was to go after the bike messengers who were trying to make a living. They would harass anyone who didn't have a helmet on or something, stupid stuff instead of the real problems of the world. The song is basically about that idea and the cop with the speeding ticket and a lot of other run-ins with cops over the years. I'm sure there a plenty of good cops, I just haven't met them yet.

What are the some CDs in your stereos right now?

Dan: Any Jawbreaker, Clash, Fugazi, Jawbox records. We've been listening to a lot of Belle and Sebastian, Seaweed.

Glenn: Dan's really into the swing thing, we hear him listening to that a lot. (laughter)

Dan: Shut up! (laughter)

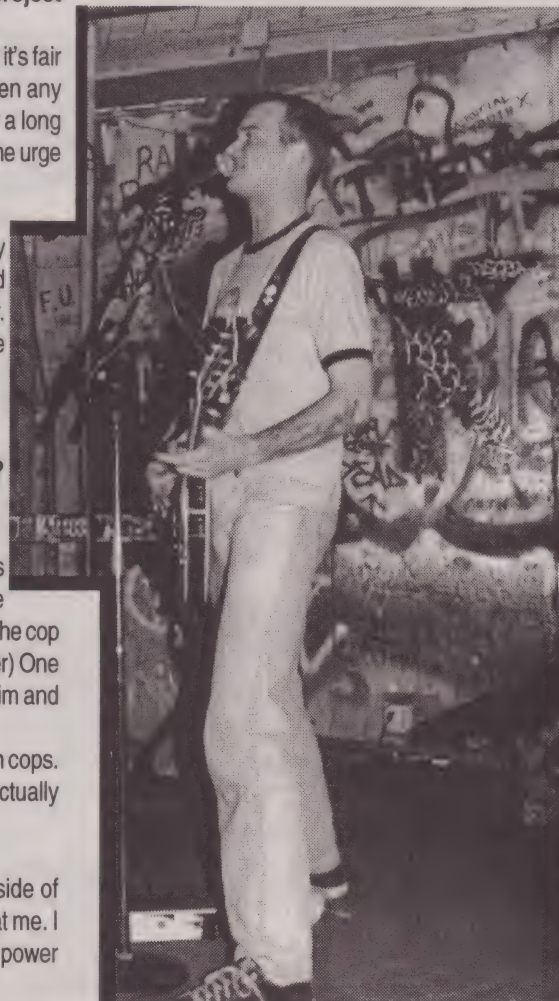
What else does Dan listen to?

Matt: Dan loves the Spice Girls, he loves Marilyn Manson. (laughter)

Dan: You forgot N'Sync!

Matt: You know the usual.

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Alex Siegfried

It takes a Nation of Millions to Hold me Back...

soon as it hit me that my status as permanent outsider led me to a strong social

Columbine High School, Spring, 1999. As the well-scrubbed, god-fearing, Britney Spears-purchasing Young Republicans of Tomorrow sat in the cafeteria and ate their cafeteria-provided cornucopia of baloney and whitebread sandwiches, they reflected on how good they had it. Their parents loved them, their peers loved them, God loved them, their boy or girlfriends loved them (in the back seat of their parents' God-fearing green minivans), and they didn't have to worry about loneliness or zits. If worst came to worst, and maybe they did feel a little lonely, a little ugly, they could always turn to the skinny, gawky kids in the corner playing Magic: The Gathering and belittle them until they felt better. Of course they could; they were Littleton's Finest.

So who the fuck was surprised when those Magic playing sissies splattered their faces all over the stain-resistant polyester carpet?

I am only two years out of high school, but I've already distanced myself from it so thoroughly that my memories seem to be of an entirely different person. Still, I can recall one thing with clarity: for perhaps the first two months of freshman year, I hung out with the popular kids, and, while near the bottom of their Hadean wall of bodies, I was at least somewhat accepted. And this fact filled me with self-disgust. I voluntarily abandoned that crowd for the computer nerds, which branded me permanently as a high school social Untouchable.

Which is not to say that my expulsion from the San Francisco University High School social mainstream was a baseless persecution. I had all the social skills of a howler monkey. I ceased desiring pity as

conscience and a tolerance for—which turned into outright enjoyment of—solitude. If my high school social life had been more Cusackian than for all I know I would've gone to college as an arrogant whitebread fraternity contender. But having witnessed the high school social system firsthand and recently, I can say beyond a shadow of a doubt I know exactly why the Columbine killers acted in the way they did.

Every class had its carefully selected whipping boys, its hand-picked nerd girls. These were the kids unfortunate enough to fit one or more of the following criteria: very young looking, unathletic, sexually conservative, easily excitable, emotionally sensitive, openly intellectual. And the tag of dork/dweeb/nerd/faggot/wussy/geek/loser/zero/whathaveyou is one that simply cannot be removed. You have been assigned your role to play for the next four years, and you're expected to play it.

There are ways out of this vicious circle, however: suicide, voluntary isolation, or, most commonly, deliberate, voluntary marginalization. A form of escape can be derived from sublimating the dominant cliques' anathemization into a personal revolt: essentially, "you can't reject me, I reject you." Or, in simpler terms:

go punk, go goth, go indie, go raver; identify with a sub-culture that is totally alien to your antagonists' pop culture. Since you no longer fit into your box, you are generally ignored entirely by the "popular" kids.

But it doesn't always work. Sometimes, your tormentors will pursue you even as you try to retreat from their world, to beat you back into your box. How do you protect yourself from emotional and physical abuse, if someone is fundamentally determined to abuse you? And this issue is even harder to resolve in a small town like Littleton.

Well, Dylan and Eric found the answer. You blow their brains out their ears with a 12 gauge. I don't buy that "there were innocent victims, too" crap, either. If someone is trying to hurt you and a bystander does nothing to stop that person, that bystander is complicit in your suffering. Columbine wasn't some demented industrial Nazis' retribution, it was an act of self defense.

Now granted, I am led to wonder why those two kids became homicidal neo-fascists while I became a pacifist punk. Mind you, I don't condone the massacre, but the white middle class' collective shock that it happened smacks of denial and a pathetic attempt to cling to the picket-fenced intellectual inbreeding Uncle Sam has built over the rotting corpses of Native America. The murders weren't shocking, they were entirely inevitable. In fact, I bet the only people really shocked are the ones who claim high school was the best years of their lives. The best years of their well-scrubbed, God-fearing lives.

Alex Siegfried attends UC Santa Barbara where he has a great radio show. Write Alex @ ghostsonata@hotmail.com

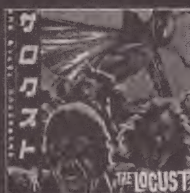
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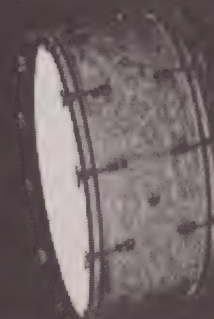
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Saves the Day

by Ross

Saves the Day

The first question is for Ted. Now, you work at Equal Vision doing mailorder. Isn't Hudson, New York—where EVR is located—a little bit far from New Jersey?

Ted: It is, but the commute is worth it. And they pay big bucks so it's doubly worth it. (laughter)

What do you do, Chris, or are you a full time rock star?

Chris: Well I do school. I go to NYU with Brian.

So let's get on with the interview. What is each of your favorite Equal Vision bands that is not yours?

Chris: I love Converge.

Ted: Geez, that's tough. Maybe Another Victim 'cause I used to play with those guys and I love those guys.

Wait a second, Ted. You work in Hudson, NY, live in New Jersey and used to live in Syracuse (read— Another Victim is from Syracuse)? What's up?

Ted: Well, I'm from all over. I actually grew up in Ithaca where you go to school.

Oh, is that where I go to school? (sarcastically)

Ted: Yes, for all you out in zine land, Cornell University is in Ithaca where I grew up. Anyway, it's either Another Victim or Bane.

Can you guys each tell me a little bit about how you got into hardcore?

Chris: I was always into punk. I loved Screeching Weasel and Jawbreaker—I was a huge fan of Jawbreaker. Brian and I have always been great friends. He got into hardcore before I ever did. He'd play me bands and I'd be like, 'what is this? They're just screaming.' After a while I developed an appreciation for it and then I found bands I could really get into like Gorilla Biscuits and Dag Nasty. So, I wasn't hardcore since birth. I went from the punk thing to hardcore which I think is probably what most people in hardcore do.

Ted: For me, when I was going to high school, there were kids who were into punk and hardcore bands like the Descendents and Bad Brains and stuff. I sort of found out about those bands and I remember wanting to get more into the music and find out more about it. So I went to record stores and said, 'do you guys have any hardcore bands?' I went through the period that

every kid into hardcore goes through, just trying to hear as much music as I could and find out as much information about the bands I liked as I could, hoping that would lead me to other bands. I would go to hardcore shows at Cornell and in Syracuse. Sean from Immigrant Sun, the guys who were in Birth Rite helped me out a lot. It was always a conscious thing, just trying to get more and more into it.

Ted, you mentioned that you used to listen to the Bad Brains. So you know they're back together under the name Soul Brains. How do you feel about reunions and are you going to go see the new Bad Brains?

Ted: I want to go. I'm very down on reunions right now, though. A lot of bands have been ruined by reunions. Like Burn, for instance. Their reunion was a terrible idea, the same with Underdog. But, it's the Bad Brains with HR so I gotta go make my venture to go see them.

Chris: It's one thing if a band tries to cash in on success that might be hitting them like 10 years after they were actually in existence. A lot of hardcore bands aren't popular until after they brake up, like Minor Threat for instance. Their following is definitely bigger now than it was back then. It's another thing if a member of a really good band starts a new band and tries to do something new. Like Jets to Brazil. As I said before, I'm a huge Jawbreaker fan, and I love Jets to Brazil. Blake is like my idol, and I love anything he does. I think they're an incredible band and he writes amazing music.

Chris, if I'm correct you write everything the band plays yourself?

Chris: I do, but it's not totally everything. Like, I'm not a dictator over my citizens. I write the music and the words and everyone puts their own personality into it.

This may sound like a stupid question, but you obviously play guitar, so why do you just sing in Saves the Day? Why not play guitar or bass or something in addition to singing?

Chris: Just because it works out to our advantage at shows. If I were to play guitar or bass and sing, people would be afraid to come sing with me. I think one of the great things about us is that if someone is really into our band, it's almost cathartic for them to scream their brains out at a show. And, we want to them to sing into the microphone sometimes, and I think most people wouldn't want to run up on stage, push me out of the

way if I were playing guitar and sing a few lines. But, if you have me only singing and I put the mike in your face, you're going to sing if you know the words.

Ted: Basically, Chris is just a good showman and he engineers the band for what makes the best act. (laughter) But, recently we've all been trying to have a foot in as far as writing songs. We're all trying to have a more concentrated group effort in the writing process. I've been writing songs and bringing them into the band. Chris has been writing songs the longest out of all of us so therefore he has the most experience, that's why we tend to use his songs. It's sort of coming around now that our band chemistry is getting better as we all have a bigger part in the writing process.

Let's talk about hardcore versus punk. Now, on the west coast where I'm from your type of music would almost certainly be labeled





punk, whereas on the east coast you guys fall somewhat into the hardcore category. What are your feelings on that?

Ted: I don't know. It's a good question. I mean, the hardcore scene on the west coast is really limited. It's not nearly as big out there. But, the punk scene—with labels like Epitaph and Fat Wreck—is really huge. And the thing is that on the east coast so much is labeled hardcore that clearly has no similarities to what is most often thought of as being plainly hardcore. Like, Lifetime or Texas is the Reason. So, yeah that's true. Since the beginning, Saves the Day has had its roots in punk music. That's what Chris grew up listening to. As we all start writing more we're trying to walk the line a little more closely and not as be as easily labeled either punk or hardcore. I think it's a mixture, or at least it's getting to be. I don't like drawing that line between the two styles, 'cause a lot of the time the best stuff is the stuff that blurs the line.

Chris: Yeah, I agree. I mean, obviously we're not screamy metallic hardcore like Converge or Bane or something. But, we're on Equal Vision which is mostly known as a hardcore label. So, any band on EVR is going to be most closely associated with hardcore. It's interesting 'cause I hear a lot of bands like Texas is the Reason that clearly have nothing in common—other than roots maybe—with most hardcore bands, but since they're on Revelation and all came from hardcore backgrounds they are labeled hardcore. When I write, I don't try to be either one, I just write music that I like. If I have more melody in my music than, say, Converge and that gets me the punk label 'cause punk has more melody than that's fine with me. Ideally, though, I would like our music to just be good music that maybe blurs the line between all types of music.

So, Chris, your lyrics seem to be really personal on your last record, "Can't Slow Down." Are you an outgoing person, ready to bare your soul to the world, or is music your way of opening up?

Chris: No that's just me. I mean, anybody that knows me knows that I'm not afraid at all to talk about myself. Here's my theory on art in general: if you make it personal and specific to yourself than it becomes more universal 'cause then people can understand and relate to your experiences. I write about me 'cause I know me best and then it just happens to work. I try to write in a very honest way, not bullshit myself or anyone who's listening, you know. I think that's the best way. In other words, as long as the music or the lyrics are from the heart, then it doesn't matter if it's yet another song about girls or how much the world sucks, 'cause it's true to you and it's how you feel.

Don't you feel a little bit vulnerable baring your feelings to the world?

Chris: Maybe a little bit, but then again I wouldn't have it any other way. I mean, if you can't bare your soul in music... in your own music, then can you ever do it any other time? When I listen to other bands, I think the most honest and introspective music is the music anyone can relate to 'cause they've been there, is the best. I mean, I guess I could write music about esoteric topics that have no relation to my life or anyone else's but then I wouldn't be into it.

Oh God, I sound so emo! (laughter)

Okay, here's the question I've been trying to avoid, but I feel I must ask because I'm super curious: what do you do with the comparisons to Lifetime that you guys get?

Ted: I think it's a flattery to a certain degree. There's the people who say that we just rip off Lifetime and have nothing original in us, I think those are the people who haven't even really listened to us. I think when the comparison came around it was in our demo days which were more influenced by Lifetime. A lot of people who I talked to when they had first heard the record thought it sounded like Lifetime but after a few more listens they changed their minds. I've met a lot of people who actually have never thought it sounded like Lifetime and still don't.

I think at times it sounds better than Lifetime.

Chris: Thanks so much.

Ted: I think a lot of the similarities are on the surface and if you actually take the time to listen to it then you'll see that what we're doing is different. Especially with the new record we're writing which is more of a Saves the Day style as opposed to a Lifetime style.

I think that Lifetime could be sloppy on their recordings. Which isn't to say that Lifetime was a bad band, because I love them so fucking much. But, on your recording it's as if the production is a bit slicker and a bit more focused.

Chris: Thanks, that's really nice of you. I don't know. I guess that people who think I write music like Lifetime are talking about our chunky guitars and probably my voice a little bit too. Just for the record, I don't intentionally try to sound like Ari and as a matter of fact I think we have completely different sounding voices. I mean, listen to those early Lifetime recordings, totally different. If it sounds like Lifetime, then hey, shoot me.

Coke or Pepsi?

Ted and Chris: Coke.

Why?

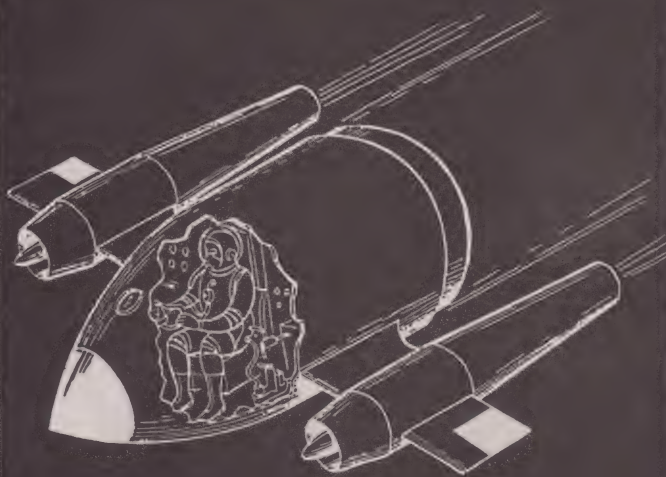
Chris: 'cause it's a better drink, plain and simple.

Ted: It's like Go-Bots and Transformers.

Oh my God. We had an article about that in our last issue. (I explain the article)

Ted: That's weird, but I was actually going to go the other way and say that the Go-Bots came first and the Transformers were like souped up version. So Pepsi is like the flashier version of Coke, hence the Transformers in this case. You've gotta give respect to your roots.

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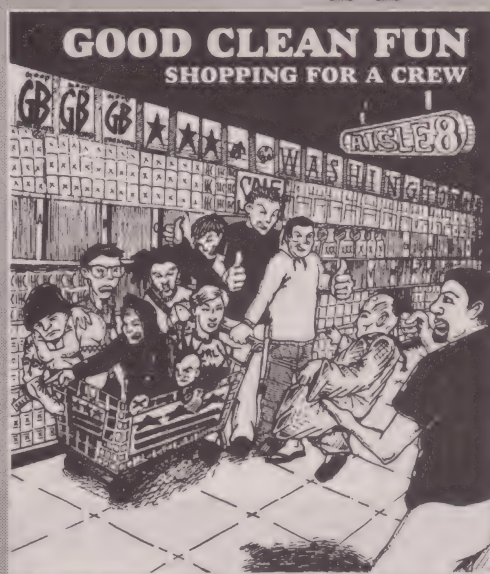
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Chicago by the Bay

Todd: Ross, how are you doing?
I'm good. How are you guys, how's your tour going?

Todd: The van broke down and caught on fire, actually.

Are you guys all right?

Damon: Yeah, we put it out with water.

Did you guys hear about the Promise Ring's van incident last year?

Bob: No, nothing like that.

Who's in the band, who plays what, and what is your favorite thing about California?

Todd: My name's Todd, I play the bass guitar, and my favorite thing about Cali I would have to say is beach football.

Damon: Hi, I'm sitting next to Todd and listening to him talk. I'm Damon and I play the drums. I honestly have to say I like the sunshine. Today going out of Chico it was really cloudy and overcast, and as soon as we started getting into this area here there was sunshine. I woke up from my little nap in the van and I was like a little kid, all smiles.

Bob: I'm Bob and I play guitar. My favorite thing about California is probably the air, but I think it's got a lot to do with the ocean and the sunshine as well. I can always tell

when we're in California 'cause of the air. Probably not in LA, but definitely up here, though.

You don't get the Lake Michigan air?

Bob: It's air but it's a different kind of air.

Chris: I'm Chris and if you don't know what I do you have no business reading this. (laughter)

So any plans for a new album any time soon?

Todd: Yes.

Damon: We locked ourselves up in a house last month. It was our little get away and we wrote for a week straight. We went down into the studio with no ideas and we just came up with stuff.

Chris: We just wrote every day... all day. (Braid bickers amongst each other for a while and get annoyed with Chris. Chris threatens to leave and Ross calms them down.)

Bob: We haven't started the actual recording for the record, save demoing, but we've got most of it written by now. Hopefully it will be out by the end of the year, but it might be more along the lines of next year, just 'cause we've been touring so much.

Chris: Yeah, we've basically got most of it written, but we want to write a bunch of more songs and then record them. We then want to demo some more and see how they sound then record them for real.

Is it along the lines of "Frame and Canvas?"

Bob: It's hard to say. We've written about six songs already and I don't know. They're a little different.

Todd: You heard the soundcheck so that was one of them.

It sounded a bit more rocking then the stuff I'm used to from you guys.

Damon: We have some more rocking songs, some more poppy songs, more mellow songs.

Todd: We're trying to do something that we haven't done before.

Damon: It's hard 'cause on "Frame and Canvas" a little less than half the album was written with the old drummer. Then I came in and helped write the remainder of the songs.

Chris: We had even taken some old songs and re-done them for that record.

Damon: So with this, I think it's more of a group effort. We've been playing some of the songs on tour so we're letting it sink in.

Bob: I think it's cool, 'cause it's like fresh start with this lineup.

You guys seem to be one of the most prolific bands out there. Not like J Church, where you put out an album a week.

Chris: No they put out an album every other day! (laughter)

Right, but on the record on Divot you guys put out there were like a bazillion songs.

Chris: Well, that was our first record.

Todd: That was our concept record. (laughter)

Chris: It had one song for every letter of the alphabet.

Bob: That was recorded in like '95 and it was after the band had been around for a little over a year. It was pretty much all the songs we had written in the first year and a half of our existence. So, we're not necessarily as prolific as you might think, 'cause we had been attacking the writing process and just coming up with tons of songs. So, when it came time to do a record, well, we were a new band with a lot of ideas, thus a lot of songs, and we just threw them all onto that record.

Todd: To make a long story short, we did that record with a friend, so we had free recording time. We made a list of the songs we wanted to record and we had a lot of them and they all began with a different letter of the alphabet.

So how has it been touring with Seaweed?

Todd: This is our first show with them so we don't know yet. We have about five more



dates with them.

Don't you think that's a bit odd, Seaweed and Braid?

Todd: No! We've all grown up listening to them.

Damon: It's an honor for us to play with them.

Todd: They're one of my favorite bands. They rock, man. We rock, man. So it'll work out well.

Whose idea was it to do the split with Burning Airlines and whose idea was it for each of you to cover a different '80s song?

Bob: It was them. They had that song learned and everything way before we decided to do an '80s song. When we first found out that we were going to do it with them, we originally planned on doing an original which was basically done by that time. But then we found out they were doing the cover so we decided to do a cover too. We all talked about it with Desoto and Polyvinyl and they liked the idea.

Damon: I remember Bob picked me up from the train station in Chicago and he had the tape of that. We had like three or four songs at practice to do and then we just realized it was obvious... Naked Eyes. (laughter)

I think you guys should ask Burt Bacharach (who originally sang the song) to come do guest vocals on your next record.

Todd: That would be amazing.

Chris: Yeah, Burt rocks!

Bob: I wanted to do "Sir Duke" by Stevie Wonder but it would have gotten really complicated with all the horns and stuff.

Bob, I've got a question for you. Can you tell me a little bit about your solo project?

Bob: It's called The City on Film. It's basically just a result of the free time I had over the summer. I was just writing songs on acoustic guitar and then it evolved into a mini tour. I had a friend in San Diego who asked if he could come. I was just going out to visit and it turned into a road trip which then became a tour. There's a split with Kind of Like Spitting. It's a total side thing. Whenever Braid has any side-time that's when I'll do it. It's pretty much just me and a guitar although sometimes I have a friend of mine play drums and some others. There will probably be an album out eventually but no plans as of yet.

Todd: I think it should be on Elektra records.

Bob: I'm really not at liberty to discuss my contract with them.

Are you serious?

Bob: Oh no (much laughter), I was reading your Elliott Smith interview before.

What's Grand Theft Autumn?

Todd: It was the label that Braid as a band started and then Bob and I started doing it. Actually it's continuing right now. Our old drummer, Roy, and I are still really good friends and we're kind of taking over the label because he has a lot of free time. We're putting out a Kind of Like Spitting seven inch, and some bands from Champaign, Urbana, and Chicago too. We have a roster, but nothing that's nailed down so I really don't want to talk about it.

Cool. Who's a better boss: Tony Danza or Bruce Springsteen?

Damon: Tony Danza. God!

Bruce: Bruce all the way. I hate Tony Danza. (laughter)

Todd: Bruce Springsteen. Especially since he got everyone back together and they're doing 19 shows in a row at Giants Stadium in New York. Anyone who can do that and be that experienced is amazing.



Chris: Yeah, Bruce just got into the rock and roll Hall of fame.

Bob: When's Tony Danza getting into the rock and roll all of fame?

Damon: I give Bruce props 'cause he's got Max Weinberg.

While we're on the subject of my man Max, who do you prefer Paul Schafer or Max Weinberg? (laughter)

Braid: Max Weinberg, hands down.

You guys tour like 9 months out of the year. How do you guys do that?

Bob: Well, last year our second album came out and we just wanted to play everywhere. Everywhere we hadn't played. We went to places like Nova Scotia and Europe.

Todd: The tour wouldn't have been that long, but we had a really good chance to go back to Europe for the second time in one year. We really couldn't pass that up. We went with Burning Airlines and we were so honored to go with them. I don't think we would have toured as long as we did if not for that offer.

Damon: It's something you have to do to succeed in this business. If you don't tour a lot after a record you will just not make it since you will not get your name out and people won't know your band and then they won't buy your records. That's my little tip for all you beginner bands that may be reading this.

Todd: This from the guy who likes Tony Danza.

Damon: Listen, Springsteen's a dork. (laughter, then everyone attacks Damon's music taste.)

Braid can be reached @ www.prairienet.org/braid

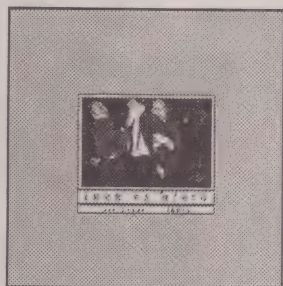


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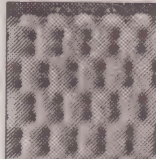


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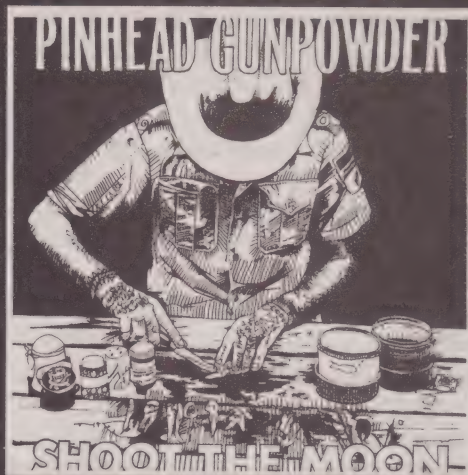


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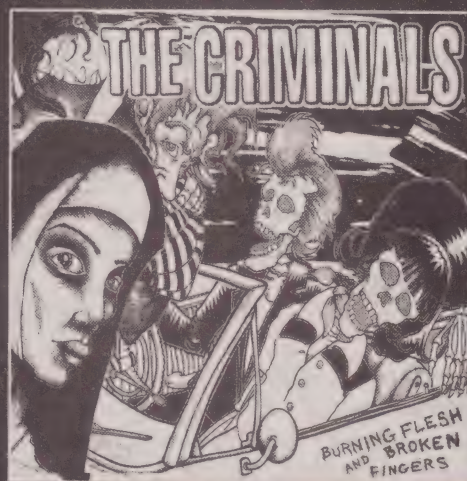


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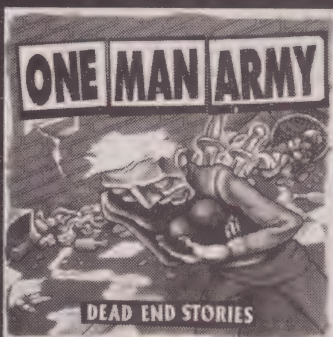
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To Tell the Truth...

by David Kaplan

"How are we supposed to live spontaneously without the haunting specter of nuclear annihilation looming over our heads?" The idea struck me all at once while I was walking home from school. It was a beautiful day, blue, bright, and cool. The little flowers, I think they were tulips, were just beginning to bloom, and there I went, plodding along the admittedly well-used trail as if I had blinders on. It wasn't as if I was in a hurry, I mean, where did I have to go anyway? I was just walking home *through* the wonderful day.

I was reminded of an old Bloom County comic strip in which the threat of imminent nuclear war causes Binkley or Opus or someone to stop dead in their tracks and bathe in the splendid beauty of a simple blade of grass; when it's all going to be gone tomorrow, everything takes on a new significance. I mean damn, a construction worker's hairy crack must have been beautiful during the Cuban missile crisis. This thought (the missile crisis, not the hairy crack) reminded me of another story, about a friend's mother (it was Tim "No Holds Barred" Holden's mom actually, but don't tell him I told you) who was propositioned during the Cuban missile crisis (Hey baby, ya wanna go out with a bang?). She turned the guy down (or so she claims), so the example doesn't really work. The important thing to remember here is that it's always funny to conjure up images of your friend's mom doing it.

OK, I guess I'm mixing up two ideas here: spontaneous living and the appreciation of beauty, but aren't both a little harder to achieve without that atomic gun to your head? Now don't get me wrong, this isn't some asshole plea for a call back to the "good old days" of nuclear nightmares. I mean, I had my share of traumatizing nuclear war dreams when I was growing up. In the weirdest one, my clarinet would launch an MX missile at these Vikings every time I played a B-flat. I still haven't figured that one out. Maybe they were cavemen. I guess that makes more sense.

Obviously I'm drifting here, something I'm sure I wouldn't do in the "every second counts" world that was the cold war. But we've lost the cold war, so I drift. I don't mean we lost it, but that collectively, we've lost the cold war as a motivational resource. So, what do we have left to keep up our intensity? Sure, you can still worry about the environment or AIDS, and you never know when fate will play the wacky terrorist wildcard, but chances are pretty good that tomorrow, when you wake up, you, your mom, your girlfriend, and your dog Tikki will all still be around, so where's the immediacy?

Well, let's try this on for size: we are going to get old some day, guys and gals. I hear you crying out, "I'm gonna stay young until I die!" Chant on, aging punksters. The rest of you, check this out. Did you ever watch a movie, or read a book or just see something that made you want to go home, lock yourself in your room and not come out until you were an artist/musician/boogie boarder? Have you ever said, "man, someday I am going to go to New Zealand and just try and live there for a while?" Well Ricky, threat of imminent global catastrophe or not, this is your time.

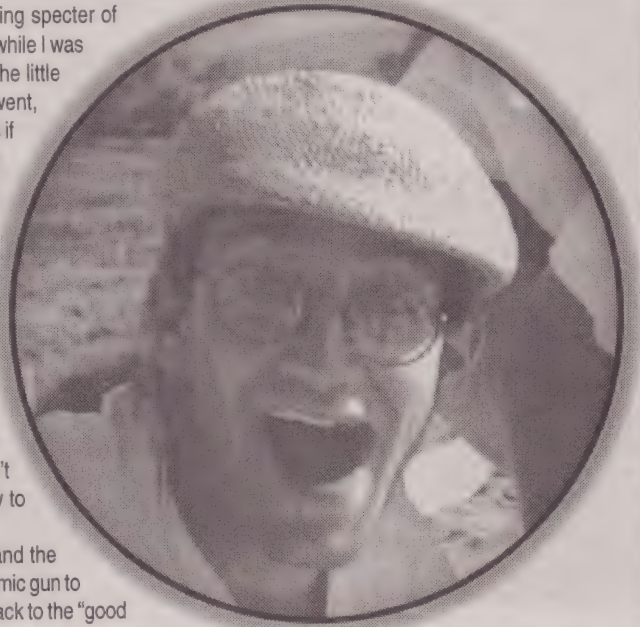
I wish I had more justification in giving this advice, but the truth is I'm trying to listen to and heed my own words here as well. I've never been to Costa Rica or Kenya or Phoenix. I've never actually been out of the country, or even been on a plane for that matter, but I tell you what—I just sent out my Peace Corps application. If that doesn't work out, plan B is to become a rock 'n' roll maybe-not-star-but-at-least-play-out-for-a-few-years-musician. These are my dreams with or without the haunting specter mentioned above. Because, even if you're not going to die tomorrow (whether it be by bomb or by bus), sometimes, after four straight hours of Super Mario Kart, you realize that you have been chewing on the pit of life's otherwise juicy peach (I speak from experience here). So turn off the Nintendo and write your damn novel already Spencer.

The task at hand then, is to grasp the frantic and what-the-fuck-ish spirit that *accompanied* the shadow of perennial fear that the cold war cast. You can do this (I think, I hope) without any bomb shelters or "evil empires" to stir you up. Just listen to the immortal words of this guy Bill Russell: "When my eyes become blind to the beauty that surrounds us all, I just sit back, take a bite out of a fresh mango, and dream." All that proves is that he is sort of loopy, but hopefully this second, fruited example drives home the point that between mangos and peaches, there is plenty of juice to drink if you squeeze hard enough? I don't know, I guess that's the point. So here is a strategy for keeping a firm hold on the spirit of the cold war, but without the fear:

Just close your eyes and think of Bill Russell (it doesn't matter if you don't know him. I don't really know him either. He's just my friend's friend who I've met twice, but that doesn't make him any more credible). OK, so you're thinking of Bill Russell. Now repeat to yourself, "He don't need no bombs, yeah! Mangos really float this guy's boat, yeah, yeah! Mangos is good 'nuff for him, oh yeah!"

If this doesn't work for you, then you need more help than I can give. That is why I'm enlisting your help. If any of you actually got this far without muttering "oh shut up already" then you are eligible to enter the first ever *Law of Inertia* write-in contest. Now it's your turn "To Tell the Truth." Just write us with your inspirational story to help us all get our asses back in gear (in 200 words or less, please), and we will shower you with praise and possibly publish your response in the next issue!!! Oh the sweet glory of fame! Also, the best response (as judged by some mentally retarded monkeys) will receive a one-year subscription to *Law of Inertia*. What more could you ask for?

You can write us here at *Law of Inertia* at info@lawofinertia.com. Please send all responses care of David Kaplan—stupid shitface. This will ensure that the correct stupid shitface at LOI gets your letter. Special apologies to Mr. Bill Russell for royally fucking up his inspirational phone message, but I don't really know you, so I don't care that much.





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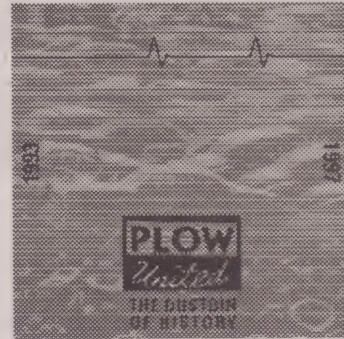
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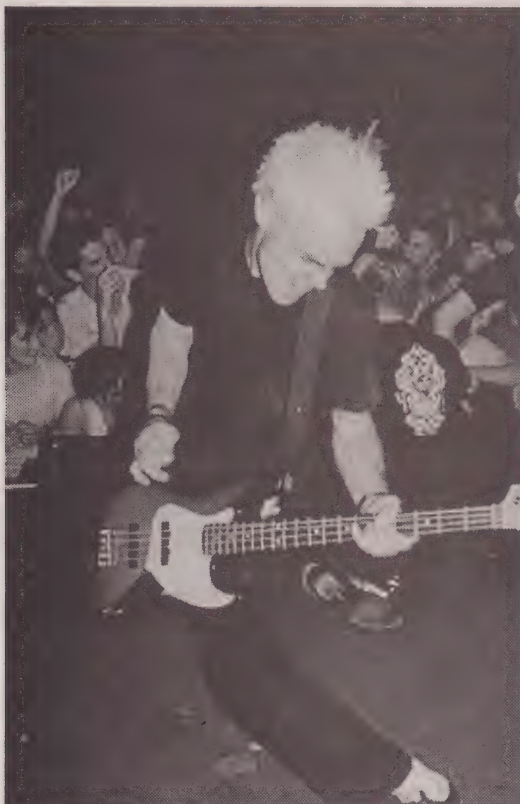


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by Ross





I've known the guys in the East Bay hardcore band, AFI, virtually since I got into punk. They had just moved to Berkeley from Ukiah, CA where they grew up, and they completely exploded in the Bay Area scene like no band before them. I've been friends with different members of the band for a while, although I hadn't seen any of them in years-- just kept tabs on them through their CDs. After receiving AFI's new album, "Black Sails in the Sunset" for review, I was pleasantly surprised to hear that AFI had really come into their own and created a truly unique sound without losing their potent levels of aggression. Recently I had a chance to sit down with three of the four AFI members outside their house in Berkeley. In this interview, I am sure that you will find that the people who make up AFI are some of the most congenial and funny people in hardcore. I now present to you, AFI.

Okay, who do I have here with me and what's your favorite glam metal band?

Adam: My name's Adam, I play drums and it's probably Guns 'n Roses.

Now, Adam, are they really glam?

Jade: Yeah, I was gonna say that.

Adam: Okay okay, it's the Crue then.

Jade: GNR did have the big hair, though.

Only for their early days.

Davey: But, when they started they were glam. The music wasn't glam but the image was glam. Anyways, my name's Dave and I sing, and if you qualify Guns 'n Roses then them, but if not then I'd go with the Crue.

Jade: I'm Jade, I got a loaded six-string on my back while we're talking glam. (laughter) There's a lot, like Cinderella's "Night Songs" is great. I was never really a big glam listener but I heard it all on MTV.

Does that have the song "Gypsy Road?"

Jade: No, it has "Shake Me." Motley Crue as well, 'cause "Shout at the Devil" and "Too Fast for Love" are awesome. Poison also. The solo on "Life Goes On" is my second favorite solo of all time.

Davey: CC was awesome. You know he has like a PhD from NYU in musicology or something.

Did you hear about Brett's movie? (much laughter) No, not that kind of movie.

Jade: Oh yeah, it was about some guy on death row.

Okay, let's begin. Davey the LOI strike-force has uncovered your high school year book and found that you were voted most likely to go to Broadway, and Mark (the original AFI guitarist) was voted most likely to succeed. When those votes were cast did you guys think you would be selling out Slim's in San Francisco two nights in a row?

Davey: Absolutely not! (laughter) When that happened, I didn't even think AFI would still be together.

Jade: I didn't know you were most likely to go to Broadway to become a singer. How did you find that out, Ross, what did you ask the Letterman team or something? (laughter)

Davey: Oh, that's right, I remember you brought that book to a show a few years ago and showed it to me. No, actually I didn't even think I would be in a band back then, 'cause when we graduated high school the band broke up for a short period of time. After that we got together and realized that we needed to be in a band. Now, it's amazing. As I said on stage at Slim's it's a really surreal experience to think that the band that started playing The Tri in Ukiah to Jade before he was in the band has gone on to selling out one of the biggest clubs in San Francisco two nights in a row is amazing. We didn't even think we would put out a seven inch. I was saying on stage that one of the first time we played there years ago with Rancid—

Oh yeah, I saw that show. And when you asked the people this time around who was at the Rancid show like half the people raised their hands.

Adam: And, I guarantee you 99% of those people were not at the Rancid show. They probably thought we meant the time we played with Rancid at the Greek Theater a year ago.

Davey: At the show with Rancid I remember Lint and I running up the stairs of Slim's and looking out the window to the street where there was that huge line, and I was so happy for them that they had sold out Slim's. It was so rad, and I remember thinking "fuck, that's so crazy that Rancid sold out Slim's." And I thought they were huge at that point too! (laughter) Then we did it two nights in a row and it was incredible. We broke the Slim's curse too, 'cause most of our shows at Slim's have sucked. Jade's good



luck. (laughter)

I remember hearing after the last time I saw you guys at Gilman that you guys broke Op Ivy's attendance record for Gilman. Is that true?

Davey: I was told that, but I don't know if it's true.

Adam: Yeah, it is true. But, you need to consider that when Op Ivy set the record it was back in 1989 and it was totally different. To get that many people in '89 was worlds harder than in 1998. If you add inflation of punk it's not as big as a feat.

Davey: And lord knows that if it weren't for Op Ivy we surely wouldn't be breaking any records at Gilman ourselves.

Adam: If Op Ivy were playing shows today, then there would be some records broke. (laughter)

Jade, so you were in Redemption 87 after AFI had been around for a while. So what did you think of these guys when you were opening up for them? Did you ever think you'd be part of this band?

Jade: Well, I went to high school with them as we said, so I've known them forever.

Davey: He was basically like a fifth member.

Jade: I never really thought I'd be in AFI. I never really considered it. I've been around them for so long that to go see AFI was like going to my friend's house. I wished I was in a band playing big shows, but I never thought, damn, I wish I was in AFI.

Well, how did they approach you to be in the band?

Adam: Well, Hunter replaced Geoff on bass in the fall of '97. He had been touring with us for about half a year and then we just asked him to join. Just this last fall we had to ask Marc to leave, and there's really not much of a story behind that.

Davey: We've known Jade forever and I've always wanted to be in a band with him. It worked out very nicely 'cause Jade's an amazing song writer. It's really cool to be in a band with at least one good song writer. (laughter). It wasn't really even an issue. When we asked Marc to leave it was sort of, "well, Jade, come play with us."

Since I live on the east coast now I've gotten much more into hardcore than when I lived out here. And, when most people think of hardcore, they think of the New York bands like Gorilla Biscuits and Sick of it All and stuff. They don't think of No For an Answer or Redemption 87 even though those bands were really influential. Now, it seems like the west coast hardcore scene is making a name for itself. What are your thoughts on that?

Davey: I think the largest and most widely accepted hardcore bands did come from the east coast, which is why the legacy is there.

Jade: It's fair that people should think of the east coast when they think of hardcore 'cause hardcore came from there and we on the west coast were influenced by it.

Davey: Then you get bands like Chain of Strength and even earlier bands like Black Flag or the Circle Jerks, and from the east coast bands like the Teen Idles or SOA.

Jade: I think California is coming into its own. We're tending to limit how much we rip off the early east coast bands. Bands like Strife and Ignite are fucking awesome and they really have their own distinct sound.

Do you guys still associate yourself with west coast hardcore scene and bands that are bigger out here, or do you think you fit more into a larger framework?

Davey: I don't think we fit in at all. (laughter) We don't sound like Strife or Trial, and at

the same time we don't really fit into the California punk rock from Epitaph or Fat Wreck. We're sort of on our own. California's lucky to be such a strong indie business area. We've got labels like Epitaph and Fat and Lookout and Rev and even Nitro. Really the only other big hardcore label is Victory and they're in Chicago. And even Agnostic Front and Sick of it All are on California labels now, so we must be doing something right. Or at least getting really good at faking our way through hardcore. (laughter)

On a different note, it seemed like when you guys moved down here from Ukiah that your band just exploded into the Bay Area scene. It was as if there was no gradual progression but more like first you weren't here, then you were and everyone came to see your shows. Maybe at that time you drew huge crowds but still only sold like 10 records....

Davey: Yeah, at that time as far as people caring about us there was a core group of people here in Berkeley who were with us almost from the beginning our life here. Before we moved here there was Jade and like 2 other people who cared about us and that was about it. (laughter) So, there was definitely a couple of years there were no one cared about us. It was cool that as soon as we moved here we played all the time and there was a small group of people who came to see us, but it really didn't leave Berkeley.

Adam: That time was so much fun because we went from having one or two shows a summer in Ukiah and looking forward the whole year to those for months, then moving here and playing shows every weekend and having a small group of people coming to those shows who cared a lot.

Davey: It was amazing.

Adam: That was the most success we could have hoped



for.

Davey: Another strange thing that's almost unreal to me besides selling out Slim's is being able to go to a different city or a different country and having kids come to see you and know the words to your songs. It's incredible. Although, not many of the people in a place like Europe know our stuff some of them do. It's so cool to go to Italy and have Italians sing our lyrics which are not in Italian. (laughter) **Now, I know a few of you guys are straightedge and a few of you are not. So, what do you guys think of the fact that hardcore is practically dominated by straightedge nowadays and has been for over 10 years?**

Davey: Well straightedge came out of the hardcore scene. I love straightedge bands, I mean I'm straightedge and I love going to those shows. I think their message is extremely positive. It's just not what I choose to do. It's not really teaching anyone anything new, it's kind of like preaching to the converted, 'cause you go to straight-edge shows and it's just a bunch of straightedge kids. (laughter) If you're not straightedge you're probably not going to go to the show 'cause it's very harsh, but I love it anyways 'cause I am.

Jade: I think when I first started being straightedge it was like in the late '80s. Back then you could be straightedge and no one gave you grief about it. Now there's such a schism between straightedge and non-straightedge kids. A lot of the non-straightedge kids who claim to be tolerant of things like that are not tolerant of those in the scene who are. I don't like militancy, but people automatically think you're judging them 'cause you don't drink and they do.

Davey: It's interesting for us 'cause I think most of our fans are not straightedge, and maybe that's because I try to keep overtly straightedge lyrics out of my writing. We haven't played with bands like Earth Crisis who are militant about that sort of stuff, but we have played with Strife and their fans seem to really like us. I think Snapcase is a band that fits in really well with us on the matter.

That's my next question. What was it like going on tour with Snapcase?

Davey: It was great. I mean, they're an awesome band.

Adam: Yeah, it was so much fun!

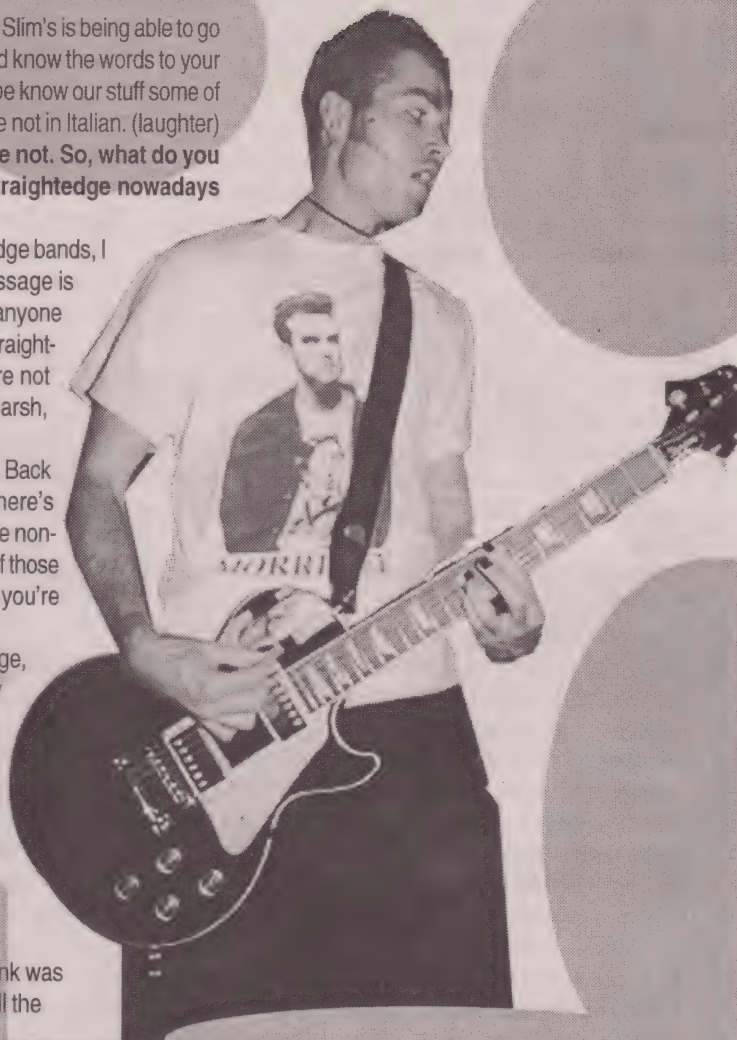
Davey: They're really cool guys and there was a point in time where Frank was going to play bass for us. We were received surprisingly well at almost all the shows. As a matter of fact the worst one was in San Francisco. (laughter)

Adam: I'd say that the worst one was at the Middle East in Boston.

Davey: Oh, they hate us at that club. But, as far as the San Francisco show, if not then there is now a large group of hardcore kids who are extremely closed-minded. If it's not E Crunch or Sick of it All then they just won't like you. Like you said in California you'd think the scene would be a little less purist as far as the whole musical ethic. We go to the east coast and we play with Sick of it All and it's fucking awesome. Then we come here and people are like, "wait, this doesn't sound like Youth of Today!" We played with Boy Sets Fire and Ensign and VOD and Snapcase. It was incredible. I was like, "here we are in New York. We're playing with all these great NYC bands. Hi, we're from California." (laughter) I went out and danced for the other bands and no one hurt me, it was great.

What do you guys think of that kick boxing stuff coming from the west coast?

Jade: People do it out here as well. There's that group of kids out here. A lot of people probably saw it on TV and thought it was cool. I went over to the east coast with Redemption and all the posi kids would not kick-box. A band would get up and say "this song goes out to all the posi kids, fuck the kick-boxers." (laughter) They don't have that out here, it's all pretty much the same. It's just something some people know how to do.



Adam: I think it's interesting. It's like break dancing. (laughter) I don't try to do it 'cause I can't.

Davey: I try to do it and I'm terrible at it but I love it.

Adam: You can do the double-twist-hop-scotch-kick-punch-spin and be cool, just like in break dancing.

My theory is that all those kids need some justification for having spent \$100 on a new pair of Nikes so they start to kick-box instead of bob their heads. It's to make their parents feel that their money was spent well. (laughter)

Jade: I'm sure all the east coast people think we're a bunch of retards for trying to dance like that out here. I hear people ask me why we even try. (laughter) What ever happened to the pogo or the circle pit?

Adam: The circle pit is one of the best things in punk rock.

Let's talk about one of the other best things in punk rock: Grafitti. Now, in every album you guys have thank-yous to people who do your grafitti in all your albums. Do people really do AFI grafitti?

Davey: Yeah, I've seen it.

No shit?

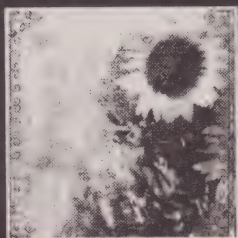
Davey: I swear. It's not like taggers, but it's kids that just happen to have a marker or something on them. We get letters about people get busted at school for writing AFI on a wall there. We're like "thanks!" (laughter) We've actually gotten a lot of kids saying they got their AFI tatoos. That is so cool! That makes us feel so good when some kid tells us he has AFI permanently marked on his skin. (laughter)

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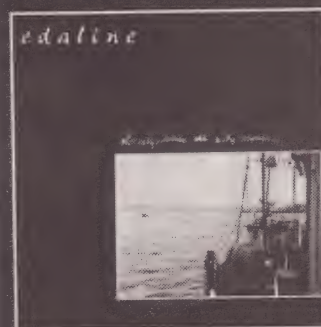
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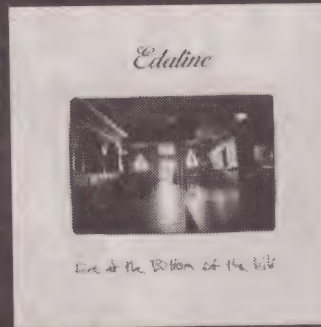


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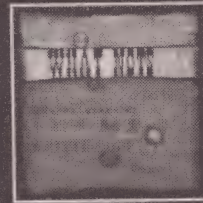
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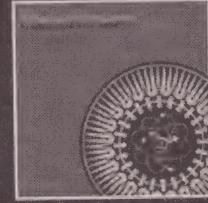
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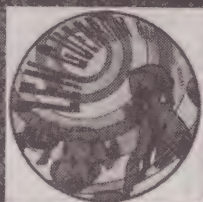
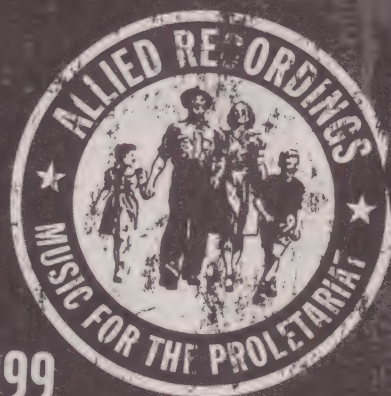
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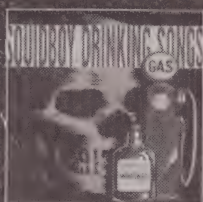
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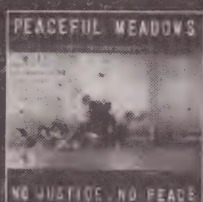
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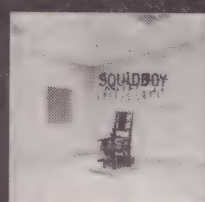
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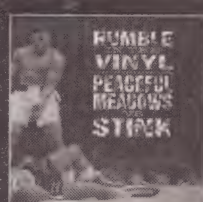
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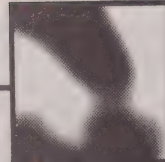
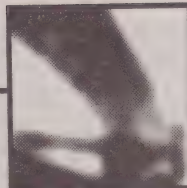
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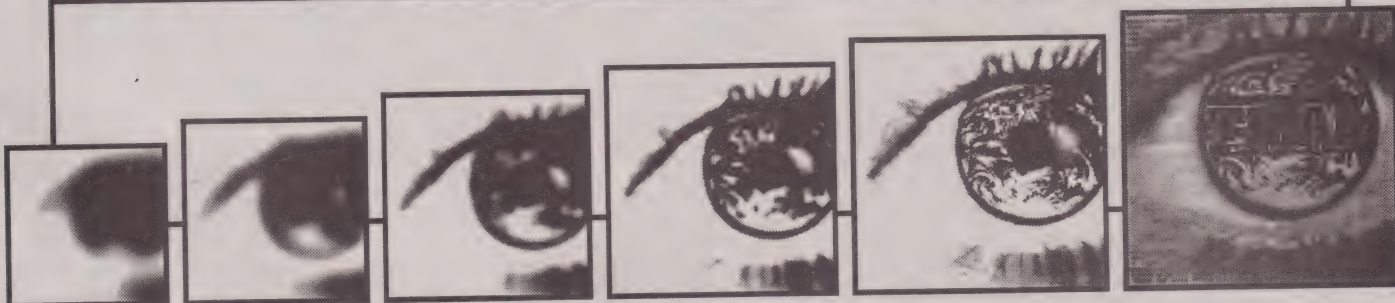
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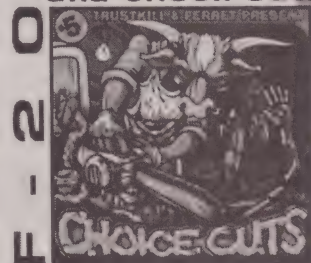


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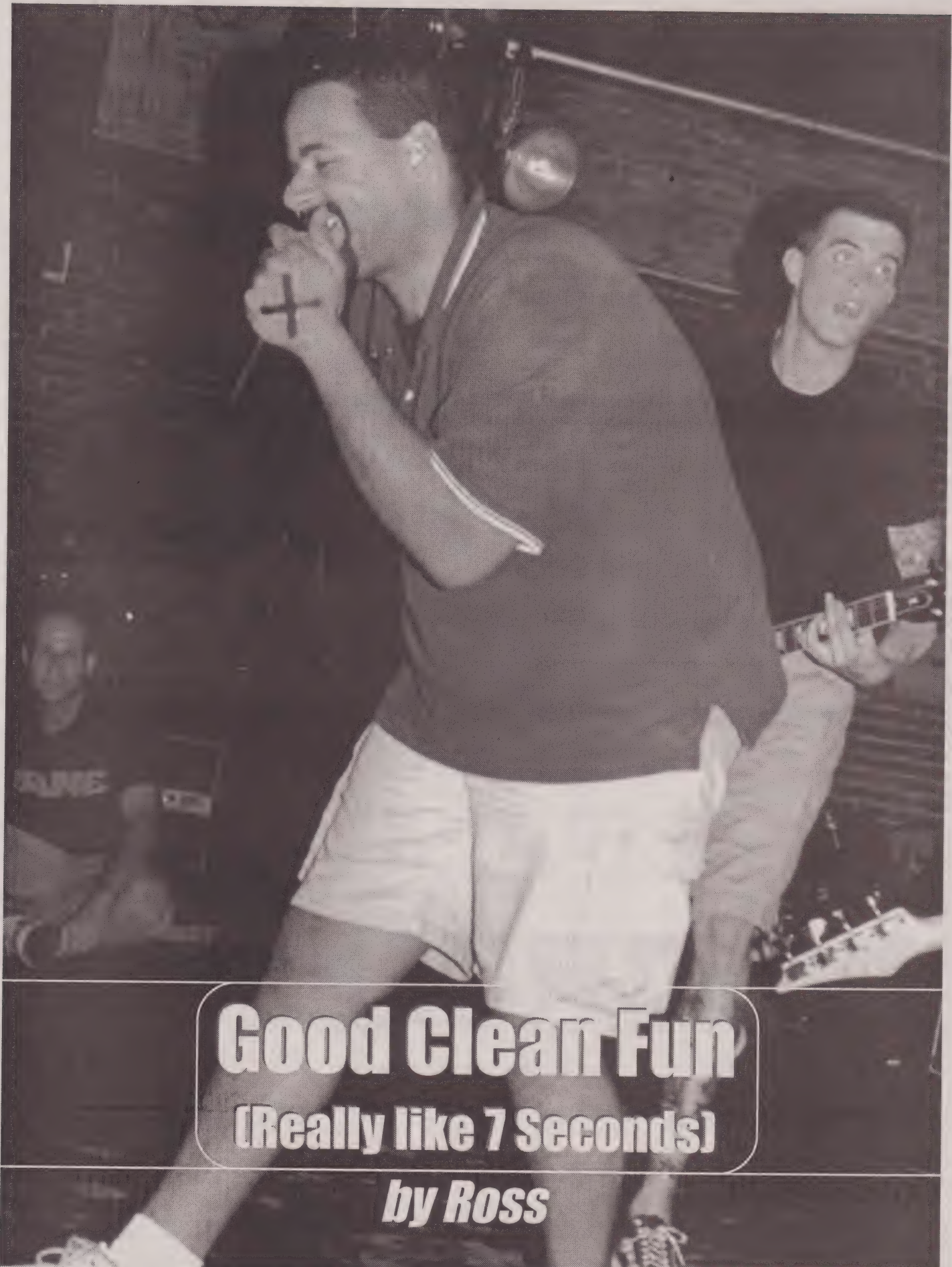
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Good Clean Fun

(Really like 7 Seconds)

by Ross

with **Issa** of **Good Clean Fun**

Okay Issa, what kind of name is that?

Issa: It means Jesus in Arabic.

Um, okay, what is your favorite band to see live?

Issa: Easy, 7 Seconds. The last time I saw them live was on the tour when Kevin shaved his head and was just singing and Bobby came back and played guitar. That was the early nineties I think. That was the best time I ever saw them, because they used to only come to D.C. in the summer time and I could never see them 'cause I was a camp councilor.

What is your favorite album cover of all time?

Issa: Depece Mode: "A Broken Frame." The cover was Life Magazine's picture of the year when it came out. I think it's a really cool image.

Does it bring out any latent political interests or anything like that?

Issa: No, it's just a cool picture. (laughter)

What is your favorite stuff to listen to in the van?

Issa: My favorite driving records are Jawbreaker's "24 Hour Revenge Therapy" and the sell-out one. Both those records are incredible. I fucking love the song "Accident Prone." Lots of 7 Seconds, mostly the old ones and the newest one. The new one is really good. It sounds like "The Crew" but with a nineties twist. People that maybe haven't liked their past few albums will like this one a lot.

Is it better than their sell-out album?

Issa: You know, I've never actually heard their major label record.

You know what, neither have I! (laughter)

Issa: So I have no idea, but they've been my favorite band forever. Let's see, Kid Dynamite's record is great to drive to. Everyone yells at me 'cause I listen to the same stuff over and over. I'm a big Weird Al fan.

Yeah I guess that goes with the territory.

Issa: Yeah. (laughter) But, he's vegan and he is straightedge. Well, not straightedge, but he doesn't drink or do drugs. Budweiser actually offered him millions of dollars to do an ad campaign and he turned it down.

So did Jay Leno, except for he opted for Dorritos.

Issa: Cool, so we've got Leno too. (laughter) Other stuff would be old eighties stuff like the Cure, the Smiths. Of course we put in Youth of Today and Gorilla Biscuits to be true, if you know what I mean.

What is the worst record you ever bought?

Issa: I actually own every record I've ever bought I think, so if it's bad and I bought it then I still have it somewhere. Wow, that's a tough call. I'm gonna have to say the last Cure record. It called "The 13th Step" or something. I heard it once and I was just pissed that I bought it, so I threw it in the back of my collection and haven't looked at it since. Oh yeah, Blink 182! I just bought their new album 'cause I love that one song where they run around naked in the video, but the album totally sucks. You know: "And that's about the time she walked away from me/ nobody likes you when you're twenty-three...."

Yeah, I like that song too! (laughter) But, I think those guys are such losers!

Issa: Totally, and the rest of the album is totally crap. I heard that all they do on stage is talk about tits and I'm not cool with that. I'm bummed that I spent money on that shit.

So you have a recording studio. What band would you love to record?

Issa: Well, I keep telling 7 Seconds that they can record for free, well, not free but dirt cheap. I don't think they know my name and they don't know me well enough to actually record for me, but I would die to record them. It would be really fun. I'd also love to record U2, 'cause I love them—except for those years when they really sucked which I guess were the popular years.

You know The Edge is straightedge.

Issa: Yeah, well I guess that would explain the name. (laughter) But, they do some really cool production stuff, and I wouldn't mind working with Brian Eno.

What's your favorite band that you have recorded?

Issa: It would have to be Worlds Collide. I think I recorded their full length when I was 20 or 21. It turned out great, but they broke up right after that so was kind of bitter sweet.



What band that you've seen has the best/most-rehearsed onstage moves?

Issa: That's a tough one 'cause there are so many bands out there that you're sure practice their jumps or facial expressions in the mirror every night before each show. Snapcase has some good moves, 'cause they don't look like they actually practice. It looks like it comes naturally to them which is refreshing. They're all so cute too which helps. Okay, Bane has great moves. Aaron from Bane has this move where he throws his guitar around and it looks really cool. Our guitar player tried to do it and ended up looking like a total dork. Their other guitar player goes really crazy as well so that helps for the whole music as entertainment thing.

I'm glad you didn't say 7 Seconds there.

Issa: Thanks, I'm trying to work around 7 Seconds 'cause they would be the answer for so many categories, which would make for boring reading. (laughter) Plus, there are bands with better moves out there. I guess that 7 Seconds really started it all, so there's bound to be bands that watch them and just take up where 7 Seconds left off as far as stage dives and all that stuff.

What band do you love even though they're really cheesy?

Issa: Crucial Youth. They were one of my favorite bands, and they're cheesy but in a good way. Their lyrics weren't very complicated, but again in a good way. You know: "When you smoke pot/what have you got/not a lot." They're definitely cheesey but as I said I love them nonetheless.

Who's your favorite teen idol musician?

Issa: Ricky Martin. (laughter) No, seriously, can I say Ian Macaye?

No everyone says him! (laughter)

Issa: Okay, Rick Springfield.

Oh that's back in the day.

Issa: How old are you?

I'm 21.

Issa: Oh you're way too young. You wouldn't understand Rick's magic. (laughter)

C'mon, I watch V-H1.

Issa: Okay, he was great, though. He was on General Hospital—even though I didn't watch that show. My sister liked all the music I liked when we were really little and she loved him.

What band do you think really deserves the 'sarcastic kick in the ass' that Good Clean Fun brings to hardcore?

Issa: Okay, there's two. The first is a band that Ken Olden and I recorded. It's a band by Josh who owns Trustkill Records called Campfire. We keep joking about putting out something on his label and some day we probably will but Campfire was the worst band ever! Josh has done a good job of covering that record up. Josh has performed what is probably the biggest cover-up since Area 51. He was in Campfire and he sang for them, and he has managed to squash the existence of this band so that no one knows they ever existed. If I were you I'd go out and get Campfire and see that Josh's vocals were a

little bit... well, let's just say that Josh is going to make a great lawyer some day and he's a great record exec., but he's not the world's best singer. It was very funny. Sorry Josh, if you're reading this, I love you but Campfire sucked. The other ones that basically influenced my lyrics are Billy Bragg 'cause he's a great song-writer and is very sarcastic; Phil Oaks, Chuck D of Public Enemy; 7 Seconds, Minor Threat but they're a little bit too negative for my taste. I love Minor Threat but I always thought they were a bit cynical. Basically the whole hardcore scene deserves a sarcastic kick in the ass. Like the animal rights thing. It started way back in the day and there were those in the scene that were preachy, and a lot of people went vegetarian. I didn't go veggie when "No More" came out. Then the whole Earth Crisis thing came around and a lot of people went vegan. So pretty soon we got this whole extreme thing where it was "Go vegan or go fuck yourself." (laughter) That phrase could sum up exactly how stupid it got, 'cause that's when hardcore went from something that didn't take itself too seriously to something that was way too serious. So that's basically what motivated me.

What's your make-out record?

Issa: There's a band from Spain called B-Tribe, that and anything by Sade are on the top of my list.

So "Smooth Operator" is your yawn maneuver song? (laughter)

Issa: Ross, I am way too old to use the yawn maneuver. (we then discuss our favorite pick-up lines).

What's your favorite band to cook to?

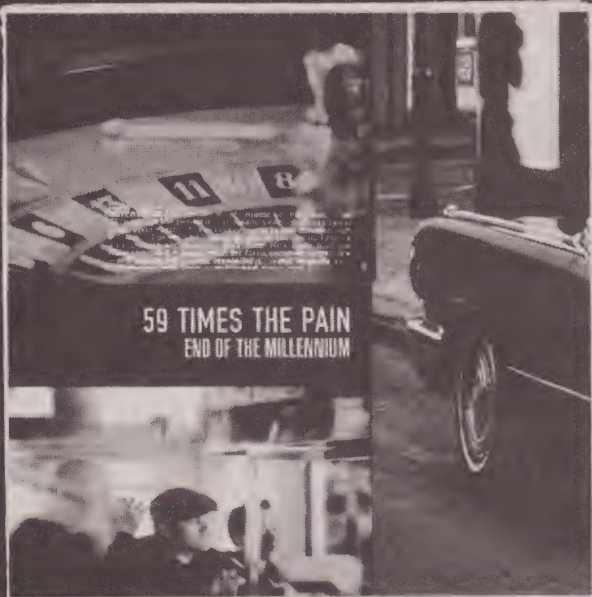
Issa: Um, how about Lifetime. I like them and I haven't talked about them yet. The running length of "Hello Bastards" is exactly the length of time it takes to cook veggie stirfry which is my favorite meal.

(laughter) No, I'm totally joking, but I love that record and I guess it would be good to cook to. (laughter)

Good Clean Fun can be reached at www.phyte.com/gcf

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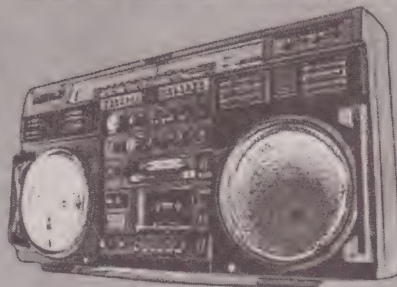


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Tourette's Syndrome and Dumb Luck

by Ross

A few months ago, Dan called me up for one of our daily "zine chats." We sat there on the phone discussing ideas for articles, interviews, features, etc. Dan has known me for at least 5 years, and like all my good friends he knows that I have Tourette's Syndrome. So, he suggested I write something for the zine on my disorder and somehow relate it to the content of *LOI*. I told him I would think about it and we moved onto bigger and better subjects like which girls at Cornell had caught my eye. So, I did think about it for the next few weeks. I considered whether or not I wanted to pour my heart out on paper discussing my disorder, and whether anyone would care. I thought about the essay I wrote for my high school paper describing the inward struggle I had overcome to succeed at the things I loved. Like anyone with Tourette's I considered the multitude of doctors I had been referred to, including the speech therapist I had when I was eight (who treated me for a Tourette's induced lisp. Of course, she had no idea that Tourette's was the cause.) who said I would be lucky to graduate high school, or the neurologist I saw when I turned thirteen who told my mother and me with a straight-face that all I needed was to relax... that I was nervous. I considered whether or not it was worth it for me to delve back into all of this in an article for *LOI*. Afterall, what does Tourette's have to do with punk (other than a terrible, yet influential early nineties grrl band called Tourette's)?

I decided I was going to do it. I went about taking some notes, journals, and fact-sheets that I had collected over the years and leafed through them for some juicy content material to write an interesting, relevant article on my disorder. Right about that time I stumbled upon the newly constructed web page of *Nothing Left* Fanzine. On the page was some information about their new issue (see zine reviews section for details): interviews with Kim Coletta, Ink and Dagger, and Kill Holiday; and articles on Scott Ritcher's run for the mayorship of Louisville, *Hate Comics*, and— you guessed it— Tourette's Syndrome. What the hell? How could *Nothing Left* do that to me?! This was/is my disorder, not theirs. I am the editor of *LOI*, and the article in *NL* was just written by some mere staff-member. What are the dumb-luck chances of finding an article on a disorder more often covered by Maury Povitch than the mainstream American media in a fanzine? Needless to say I was dying to read the article. What I finally found was a top-notch account of a man named Tim Schwader's life with Tourette's and a bunch of pertinent information on the subject.

In his article, Mr. Schwader describes his evening rituals prior to bedtime, and the struggles he must endure in falling asleep. He discusses a few of his "tics," or Tourette's induced muscle/vocal movements that cannot be actively controlled by the body. Mr. Schwader also talks about how Tourette's is viewed in the media, which famous people have the disorder, and some of the common misconceptions about the disorder. Like my mom, who watches movie credits to see who the Jews on the production staff are, I must admit I feel vindicated whenever I hear of some famous person with a genetic disorder like mine (and there are more of them than you think. For instance, have you ever seen Jose Canseco's head movements before he steps up to the plate? Check it out some time.). I also feel like I am a victim of hate when I see Maury Povitch's audience all but taunting a swearing, clucking, twitching young man that might have easily been me. So you see, it is just as important for me to read an article like Mr. Schwader's as it is for me to write one. It's as if there are others out there who understand me and care enough to want to help the ignorant.

He did a great job and I really cannot find any need for critique (although it sounds as if Schwader's Obsessive Compulsive Disorder is far worse than his Tourette's). Since I cannot add on to Schwader's excellent informational, I would like to take a little time to tell you about my life with Tourette's and the musical institution that practically saved me from becoming a lunatic due to my feelings of alienation that came from from the disorder.

In a nutshell, I have had symptoms of Tourette's since I was a baby. My mother told me I used to open my mouth very wide on occasion for no apparent reason. She took it to mean I was hungry. I was a very fat baby. As I slowly entered puberty my tics were exacerbated immensely. I developed a habit of taking very deep breaths every few seconds that prevented me from completing any task at hand. Other tics at that time were jerking my abdominal muscles in such a way that my whole body seemed to force itself to the side. Perhaps the strangest and most demeaning tic I had back then was emitting a low, guttural grunt whenever I wasn't speaking. To counteract this tic I became very verbose. I was and still am a very talkative person. These tics slowly grew worse until I reached age thirteen. By then, I had seen just about every kind of doctor my parents could think of: eye doctors, ear nose and throat doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, speech therapists, peditricians: the works. Unlike many people, my parents are of means and could afford to find me the best medical

care money could buy. Unfortunately the best does not necessarily mean competence... it usually just equals the most expensive.

When I was thirteen, I had to drop off the soccer team (a sport I loved and excelled at) due to my post-goal ritual of jerking my body from one end of the field to the other which really scared opposing teams. That was it. The mystery disorder had never interfered with my life directly until then. Sure I thought I was possessed (seeing the Exorcist at that time was not a good idea). Sure I was picked on at school and became very skeptical of human nature due to that fact. But, never before had I been prevented from doing something I loved because of whatever it was I had. My parents finally decided to take me to a neurologist on recommendation from the psychiatrist I had been seeing at that point (on a side note, it took the psychiatrist 3 years of therapy and muscle exercises to diagnose me. Duh!). The neurologist told me that I did in fact have Tourette's Syndrome, a neurological disorder caused by faulty dopamine receptors in the brain. He told me that I was not crazy and that there were many others like me, and, many of them had worse cases. Finally! Something I had suspected (but still haven't confirmed) was true: I was not a lunatic with a permanent case of too-much-stress! I was cured! or was I? This neurologist soon came to tell me that Tourette's was incurable and unpreventable. I had it, now I had to live with it and try to sign up for welfare checks as soon as I inevitably dropped out of school. The best I could do was relax and not drink too much caffeine. Well that was kind of a let down to say the least. Here I was, thirteen with some disorder I had only heard about from LA Law, and I was doomed to live with it— on welfare, no less— for the rest of my life. Well, there goes any chance of a girlfriend.

As I mentioned earlier, I am really lucky to have two parents dedicated to finding me the best medical care around. What did my mom do next? She called up one of her doctor friends and tried to find out who the best specialist west of the Rocky Mountains on Tourette's was. One week later we met him. This doctor, Dr. Lowe, told me that it was not me who was crazy, but that neurologist guy who told me to relax. Tourette's is, in fact, treatable to a certain extent. Dr. Lowe explained to me in very uncertain terms exactly what I had so I could go in and tell my seventh grade class all about what made me grunt whenever took a test or why I had to blink my eyes tightly every ten seconds. Basically Tourette's Syndrome is like one of those adjustable light switches that makes a light brighter or dimmer as you push the lever. My body does not know whether I am a) consciously moving the lever, thus making my body move in ways I do not command it to; b) moving the lever a lot or a little, hence making my small actions seem exaggerated and bigger actions imprecise. So, that's it. It's my fucked up light switch that forces me to dig calluses into my hands from tightening my fingers. Great, now where are the pills?

I won't bore you with the individual events that defined my Tourette's life for the next eight years after diagnosis. I will tell you that I have become much more comfortable with my tics due in part to puberty ending (though, I still can't grow a beard yet, though), medicine, and maturity. My tics have changed drastically over the years, as is the nature of Tourette's, and I no longer grunt uncontrollably in math class... partly because I don't take math anymore, and partly because I have other tics that have replaced that one.

As Mr. Schwader stated in his article, Tourette's can be lessened by physical activity. In other words, my body might be so busy running to catch the bus that it forgets about my constant throat-clearing. So, I instantly found an outlet for the nervous energy which fuels Tourette's in punk rock. From my first stage dive to my two hundredth pogo, I find that one or two nights of dancing really helps me deal with my disorder due to the stress reduction effects of simply letting loose. More importantly, I found in punk a place where I didn't have to cover up anything or pretend I wasn't who I was. Maybe that's why I think it is not necessarily a coincidence that there have been articles in *Nothing Left*, *HeartAttack*, and now *LOI* about Tourette's: 'cause punk is generally a very tolerant and empathetic sub-culture. Furthermore, the beauty of punk-- at least for me-- is that it lets kids deal with their problems, physical or mental, in a peaceful environment with little judgement on the part of others.

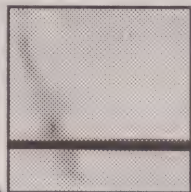
You must realize I have a very mild case of the disorder. I do not swear or bark like a dog uncontrollably which are examples of tics that manifest themselves only in the worst cases. In fact, many of my tics at age 21 are not as easily discernable to the outside observer as they were at age 13. And, it is encouraging to know that there are people fighting to find ways of lessening the effects of Tourette's and those that are spreading awareness of a disorder they say 1 in 30 people has. People like Robin Williams are right there on the front lines of promoting Tourette's research, and I must say it is comforting to know that Neve Campbell's pet charity is the National Tourette's Syndrome Association.

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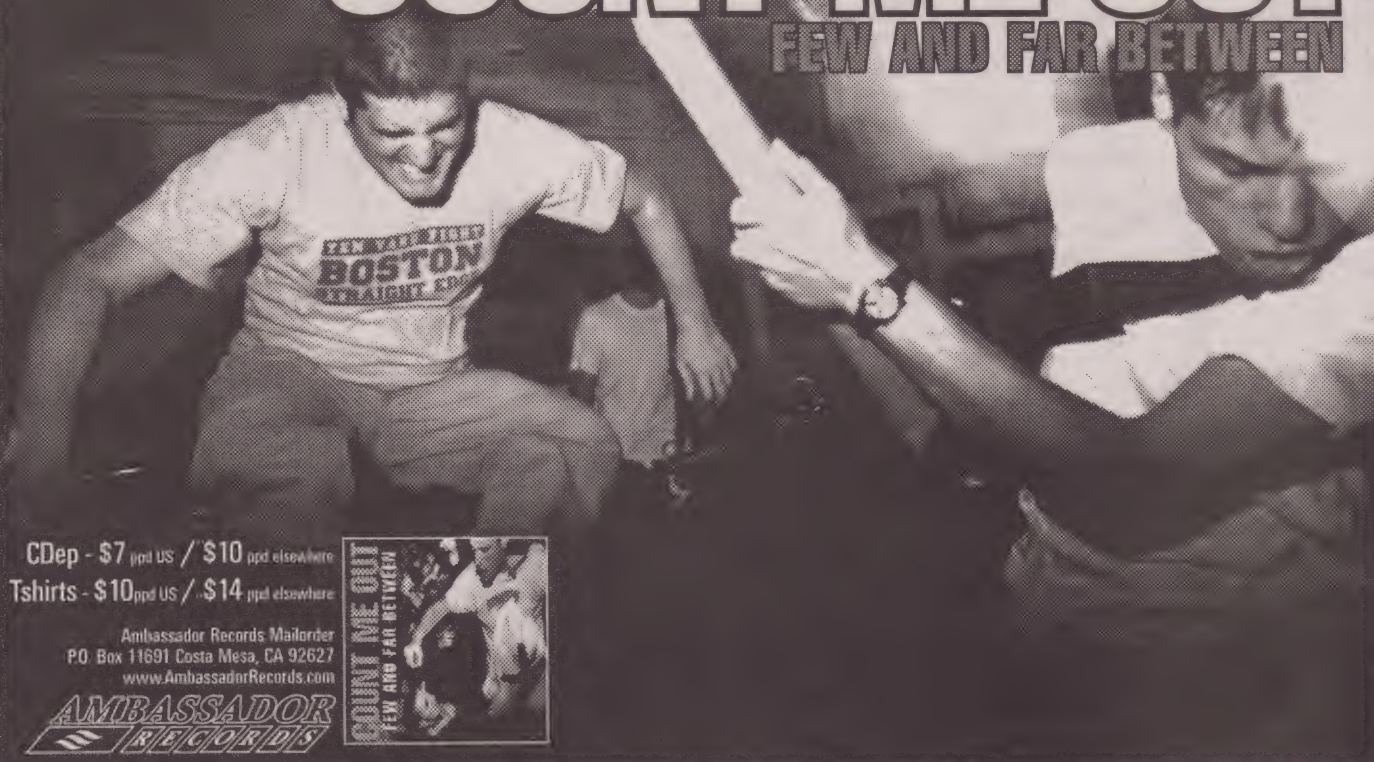
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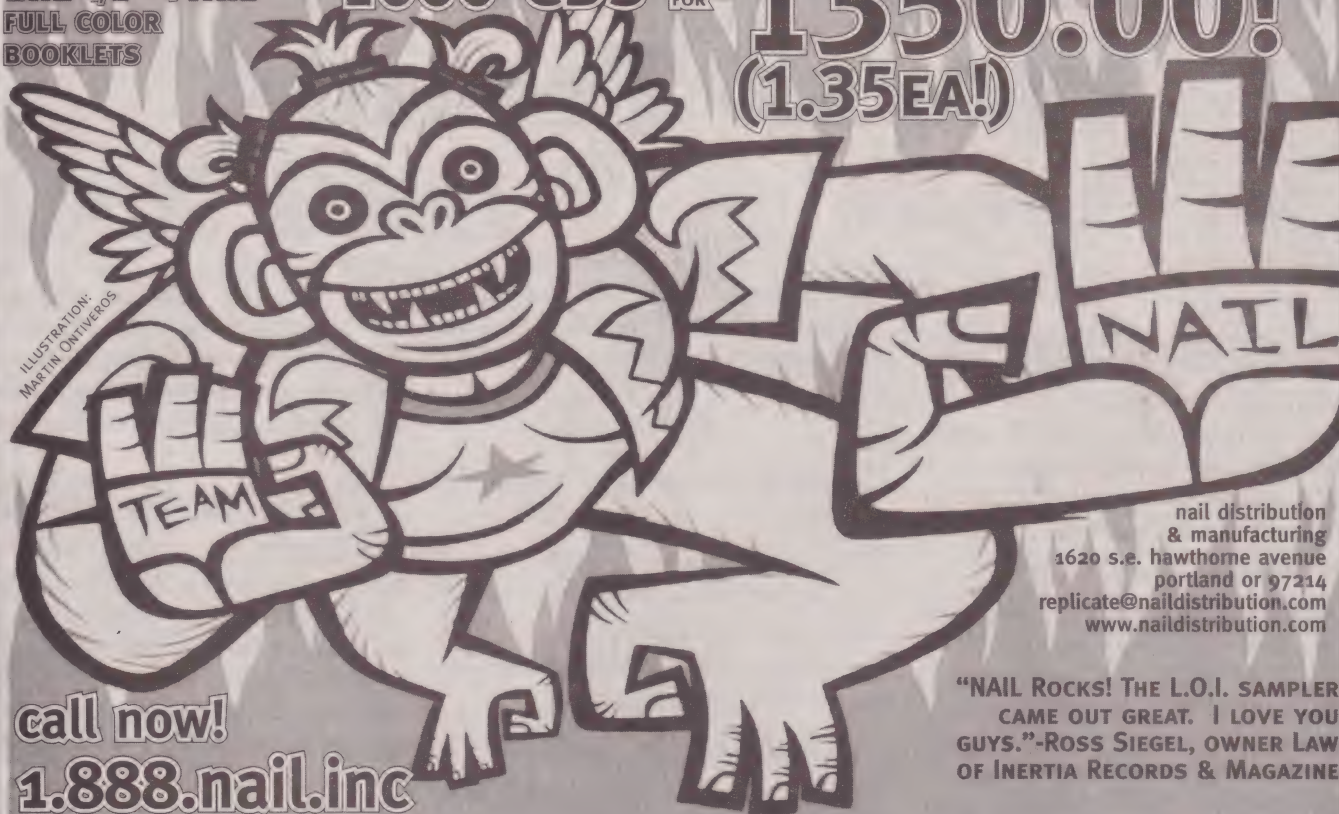


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The Top 8 Worst Trends in Indie Rock

by Ross

8) Spandex Headbands

The Goods: They usually come in darker colors, thankfully no one in hardcore felt the urge to bring back hot-pink or fuchsia from the eighties (on a side note, I've seen girls wearing bra straps and guys wearing elastic--presumably from boxer shorts-- as headbands).

The Craze: I first noticed the things when I moved to the east coast-- a few hardcore kids up in Ithaca had them on. I thought that this trend had not migrated to the west coast, but to my dismay I found Davey Havok of AFI wearing one at our interview. I love Davey to death and respect him as an artist and a person, but the guy was never accused of having great fashion sense (anyone who ever sported a mohawk will always have to live that down).

The Nerve: Everyone I see wearing these things has short hair! I could understand why a slam-dancing butt-rocker would need a headband to keep his long hair out of his eyes, but why would someone with hair that barely reaches their eyes need a headband?

7) Workout Gear

The Goods: I am fully aware that running shoes and hooded sweatshirts have been ingrained in hardcore ever since the jocks in Youth of Today began to run and jump all over New York venues. But, what is up with the sudden need for hardcore kids to wear those \$30-a-pair nylon Addidas warm up pants? Isn't this taking the strong/tough/healthy thing a bit too far. The moment I see someone sporting one pant-leg pulled up to mid shin while floorpunching I'm going to be all about the Spice Girls.

The Craze: I think this trend is biggest in the youth crew scene. Figures.

The Nerve: Weren't punk and hardcore supposed to be some sort of statement about being different than the football players in high school? I completely agree that sports are good and athletics are a great way to blow off steam, but do we have to look like we just came from soccer practice? And,

I guarantee you that most kids who sport the basketball jerseys haven't played a game of hoops since the 6th grade.

6) Ska

The Goods: I am a ska purist. I like indie rock pure of ska.

The Craze: Who else thinks skanking is the most ridiculous possible forced movement? C'mon, it's running in place for 2 hours.

The Nerve: If I hear one more Sublime remix, overdub, redub, dub, remastering....

5) Off Key Voices

The Goods: Don't worry emo, you'll get yours as well. It seems like every other singer for an emo band has to make himself sound like he/she is crying (although it's usually men). It's like if they cry while they sing then they will convey how vulnerable they are, hence how emotional their music is.

The Craze: I think bands like Mineral and Cap'n Jazz (and even good bands like Piebald) really set this trend in full effect. All I can say is that I long for the days when crooners like Burt Bacharach were considered emotional.

The Nerve: Since when is bad singing good?

4) Obtuse Band Names

The Goods: While looking at the roster of a certain publicist's, I noticed that all the bands on it had really esoteric names. It's like any two or three words that sound good together-- whether or not they have any symbolism or sense to them-- are cool. My friend Bobbo took the cake when he suggested the band name "One Lonely Star." On the flipside, every single hardcore band nowadays has one word names like that just make you think of screaming. Strife, Turmoil, Hatebreed, and Throwdown come to mind. Whatever happened to Herman's Hermits?

The Craze: I think this all started in the early nineties as hardcore and metal converged (get it? Converge! Get it?). I think we have Integrity or Guilt to thank for this.

The Nerve: God, that's so stupid. Why do bands

have to pick their names based on the music style they play. If you're an emo band you take an obtuse name, if you're a hardcore band you take a one-word tough sounding name. When will it all end?

3) Gibson SG Guitars

The Goods: Okay, I admit it. I have a '76 SG that is my pride and joy. That is why I can tell you with a straight face that I am insane for liking my guitar so much. The fact is, if the SG did not look like the batman symbol no one would buy them. They're relatively unflexible, the strap always falls off unless duct taped down, and they are super expensive to boot.

The Craze: I think we can either blame this one on Angus Young from AC/DC or Pete Townshend. Of course, when they played them, everyone else was playing Strats or Les Pauls, so they were cool. Now, you can't possibly do your 124th note palm-muting without an SG in hand. What are we thinking?

The Nerve: Let's face it, an American made Fender Stratocaster is the best guitar money can buy (within reason, of course). So, why do we all work all summer to buy our SGs and Marshal stacks? It's because we all thought Angus Young did a better duck-walk than Chuck Berry.

2) Nerd Glasses

The Goods: I hate those glasses. They a) cannot be comfortable; b) are most often unnecessary; c) make people look like someone from Revenge of the Nerds; and, d) are everywhere. It was cool for like five minutes. Now it just makes me long for the days of those John Lennon glasses.

The Craze: This seems to be much bigger in the kinder side of indie rock. I guess, tough guys don't wear them since it's uncouth to windmill a guy with specs.

The Nerve: You're all sheep. And thank God I don't need glasses.

1) Zines

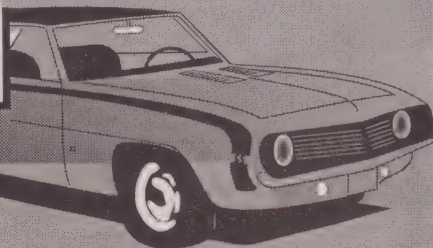
Bottom Line: Been there, done that... a million and one times.



**American Steel
by Dan**

American Steel

heating the odds



When I moved to Connecticut a year ago, I was dismayed to learn that many San Francisco bands who I considered vital to the music scene were almost completely unknown out east. Unfortunately, American Steel, Oakland's homegrown punk rock heroes, were among them. But with a brilliant record behind them and another on the way shortly, American Steel is poised to conquer the world with their unique style of blazing, emotional punk combined with singer Ruari's one-of-a-kind screamed vocals. Although the band has been no stranger to hardship, it hasn't dimmed their positive attitudes for a moment, as I think this interview will attest.

Okay, who's here and what do you do?

Ryan: I'm Ryan, I play guitar and I sing.

Rauri: I'm Rauri and I play guitar and I sing.

John: I'm John and I play bass.

I'm Dan and I'm the interviewer.

Ryan: I'm Scott and I'm not here.

Do you guys want to start by talking a bit about your recent move to Lookout and how that's been?

Ryan: It was around mid-February when we actually signed to Lookout. It was my birthday, actually.

Rauri: It all happened pretty fast. We were both interested and there was a sort of communication going on and then everything unraveled pretty fast from there.

Had Lookout! been expressing interest before?

Ryan: Well, it was sort of random communication and then the whole thing happened in the span of one or two weeks. It worked out very nicely and it seemed like the right thing to do. There's certainly no bitterness with the old label, New Disorder. It was just sort of the way things worked out.

Did you feel you guys had outgrown New Disorder?

Ryan: I wouldn't say that. Outgrown has negative connotations. It was just sort of the scope of everything we wanted to do and how much we wanted to be on tour. We just had things we wanted to do that required a little more support than New Disorder was able to give.

Rauri: From a selfish point of view we can now do more. We can tour more now which is what we enjoy.

It seems that musically you guys are a lot heavier than the other stuff on Lookout as compared to bands like Servotron or the Go-Nuts or whatever. Do you feel out of place?

Rauri: I think if you look at some of their recent signings it would certainly be a trend to record more standard punk type stuff. If you look at the other bands, I don't think that a lot of those bands fit Lookout! very well at all.

Ryan: We're still in the Lookout! Records of 10-year ago mindset.

Yeah, the type of stuff you're playing fits in more with the Lookout! of ten years ago when they were doing Cringer and

Crimpshrine and stuff like that.

Rauri: It doesn't affect the way Lookout! deals with us or the way we deal with them. But, it might affect the way some people look at us like the people that hear of us first as being a Lookout! band.

Ryan: Some labels used to be that way, like SST, where they had a label image and they're doing their own unique thing which you can tell is the Lookout! sound. A lot of kids like the Lookout! sound per se and the Fat Wreck sound as well and the look for stuff that fits labels like those two. We might not fit their picture and that's fine. In a nutshell it doesn't sound weird that we sound different.

Rauri: It certainly didn't impede Avail at all. No one thought of them as a Lookout! band.

John: They just thought of them as a band that toured a lot and sounded good and they happened to be on Lookout!

So, is the new record done?

Ryan: Yup it's all done. It'll be released October 19th. It has fewer songs than the last record. The last record had 17 songs and that seemed a little excessive so this one has 13 songs. I don't know, maybe we were a little more picky this time.

Rauri: It's got a lot more mid-tempo type stuff which may be more reflective of our influences. Probably a little bit less off the cuff.

John: For your first album you have years to draw from if you're a band that's been around a while. So, some of the songs may end up being 4 or 5 years old.

Ryan: On that first full length there were songs that Rauri had written when he was like 14 or 15 years old. This record might be a little older 'cause we've weathered a lot in the last three years.

John: Not matured, but weathered.

Rauri: Quotation: brooding sophomore effort. (laughter)

So you guys wrote everything on this album after the first record was done.

Ryan: Yeah, the songs we wrote for this record were done on the tour that followed the first record.

Are there new things lyrically?

Rauri: A lot of the songs on the new record are a lot more overtly political. Around the time of the first one I would write these huge reams of political manifestos that were just pathetic. (laughter) I really admire bands that can do political material well—

Ryan: And few can.

Rauri: I don't think I can. The problem is you either write a total political manifesto or catch phrase, or there's something in the middle that's just trite recycling of old catch phrases. I've finally found a way to express myself politically without getting caught up in any of those traps too



heavily.

Ryan: The punk rock police that too many bands have beaten into the ground are these anthemic slogans that say nothing but rehash meaningless sayings. You know, 'down with society... punk rock!' (laughter) People write out the problem, explain the problem, tell what we should do about the problem and it's not a lyric it's a manifesto which usually does not make for good music. You get 13 songs on a record and you're like, 'dear God this is boring.' It's just recycling Chomsky or something. For my share of the lyrics I wrote all of them after I found out I was sick.

Do you want to talk about your health at all Ryan?

Rauri: There's the segue. (laughter)

Ryan: Sure. We were supposed to leave for tour in May and about a week before we left I found out I had leukemia. I've been in chemotherapy for the last 4 months. I've done 5 rounds of it and I've got 3 to go. We're hoping after that to get back out on the road, but it just depends on what the doctors say. So far, so good. I'm very bald. (laughter)

Has the label been supportive or are they like 'tour, now!'

John: No the label's been great.

Ryan: This actually happened right after the time everything was set to go. We were starting to make plans for recording and they were willing to let us escape the whole contract or do whatever we want. Both the label and Kevin Army who recorded the record were cool about letting us do it for an extended period of time. So, I'd go in for chemo for 2 weeks then we'd go record for 3 days, then go back to the hospital, and we recorded it piece by piece like that.

John: And, I guess that might have affected the album a lot, 'cause we've never recorded like that. We're so used to recording in layers. We didn't get a chance to brood over the recordings and it was really down to the wire. It might have been a different album if we had recorded it when we were going to in early June.

Ryan: But the time in between when we recorded was totally unproductive as far as the band is concerned. Everyone was working and I was in the hospital. So it wasn't like we had time to practice or change a part of a lyric or anything like that.

Are you getting questions from fans asking why you aren't playing shows?

Rauri: Probably the worst thing is I was at a party and I was wearing an American Steel jacket and someone came up to me and said, 'oh that band, I heard they broke up.' And, I guess there are other people who thought we broke up as well. That was the worst thing.

Ryan: Yeah that and the months of vomiting. (laughter) No, I'm just kidding.

Do you guys want to talk a little bit about the history of the band?

John: Sure, I'll take it this time. Since I wasn't there it's all hearsay. So everybody was sitting around one day drinking beer where Ryan lived in west Oakland. And...

Ryan: Actually the band started in San Francisco.

John: Why don't you tell it asshole. (laughter)

Ryan: Well, the band started when Rory and I were just hanging out, and he would always come out to my house in the city [San Francisco for those of you that think 'the city' is New York]. We decided to start a joke band. We had a friend who had a



warehouse in west Oakland where I actually ended up moving. So we started playing together with our friend Mike and started off from there as a 3 piece with me on bass. We had some revolving doors for a while. Eventually, John played drums, I played bass, and Rory played guitar. Finally we decided to get a real drummer so we got our friend Jamie to play who was amazing, and at that point we went from being just for shits and giggles to a serious band trying to write serious songs.

John: At that point he could play the song he had written at the tempo he wanted. (laughter)

Ryan: After a while Jamie left 'cause he wasn't into touring and we really wanted to tour a lot. So we got Scott on drums and here we are now.

Now you guys got your name from the building across the street from us right now, right?

John: Yup.





Where does the logo of the guy slapping his head come from?

Ryan: Allegedly this girl made it up for stickers and flyers for Rauri's band when he was in high school. We saw it and decided we liked it, which was then a few years later, and we've been using it ever since. We're still not totally convinced that she actually drew it, but we're assuming she did so we don't have to worry about copyright infringement.

John: Our band is one big copyright infringement at this point, so it's cool.

What do you guys think about the Berkeley scene and how it's been changing the past few years? Do you think it's taken a turn for the better or what?

John: First thing that's funny about the Berkeley scene is that no one lives in Berkeley anymore 'cause no one can afford it. So it's geographically more spread out. There still, I guess, a Berkeley sound, but that's a whole different can of worms.

Ryan: It seems like things have started going underground again and that's kind of nice.

The flipside of that is that there are less venues.

Ryan: There are less venues, but there really aren't that many good bands either so who needs that many venues. (laughter)

Rauri: I was actually at Gilman last weekend and I was noticing that there's a younger generation that's just coming to shows. It seems that without even a big headliner there people are still coming. I don't really know what that means, and they're probably coming from outside Berkeley, like in the 'burbs.

John: But the East Bay scene has always been like that.

Rauri: It's refreshing to see intelligent, free-thinking people who are being individual which maybe you didn't see a few years ago when MTV raided Berkeley. I think maybe that's the only way for punk to survive when the younger generation takes over the scene.

John: I've noticed more diverse shows where people aren't as concerned with uniformity in each particular show.

You read a lot of stuff about how the Epicenter in San Francisco, this really famous punk rock music collective, goes under and then there are interviews in LOI and Punk Planet about how the same fate awaits Gilman.

Ryan: It seems pretty unfounded to me. It's sort of changing back to what it was like 10 years ago.

John: It goes through stages of popularity and then unpopularity but I think the core underground remains unchanged.

Ryan: I think if you're doing something interesting and noteworthy then less people might take notice...

John: Or maybe more people if what's going on in the mainstream is boring or unoriginal.

Ryan: Yeah and mainstream music is about as low as it can get now. If you look at MTV right now it's all 4 person pop bands singing songs about sexing you up. It's kind of exciting 'cause now we're all waiting for the next big thing. It's just trash and it's good for us.

Rauri: Yeah, we feed on the rotting corpse of popular culture.

(laughter)

Ryan: The other thing I'd say is like 2 or 3 years ago, I think most of the hardcore punk rock scenes in the country had a real backlash against any of the punk that sounded mainstream. Anything from around here like Green Day, Samiam, Jawbreaker. So you got the metal and crust stuff that got big out of pop-punk's ashes.

Rauri: I think perhaps we'll look back at the mid-90s of the Berkeley scene as being sort of a dark age 'cause nothing grew out of Green Day's success. Right now, it's exciting 'cause a lot of people are getting enthusiastic and active. I think either punk rock is dead or we'll survive another decade... which is what punks say every end of a decade. Hopefully punk will learn from this down time and become more free-thinking and interesting.

I wanted to ask about a specific song on the last record. That song, "Fargo." What's that about? (Ryan laughs)

Rauri: Why are you laughing?

Ryan: 'Cause people always ask that! I was traveling with this band Half Empty and we ended up in Fargo. Part of it is me coming from the East Bay and when you travel you quickly learn that the rest of the country is very intolerant—although the Bay Area has its share of intolerance. Just walking around Fargo and getting called 'fagot' and getting threatened from the local population 'cause I'm wearing a patch on my jeans.

It seems like a lot of the stuff on the first record was negative and came out of despair.

Ryan: I actually think of a lot of our stuff as being really positive but the positivism comes out of extraordinary despair so you're right there. If you look at a lot of it, it's actually trying to put a spin on life that involves a reason to stay alive.

Rauri: It's a pretty rudimentary idea to play music that exorcises some demons.

So is there any of the ska type stuff on your new record or did you just drop that completely?

John: There's some clean tone which is rare for us nowadays.

Rauri: I'm mean, I'll always be influenced by reggae and stuff with soul.

Ryan: It's not like we went punk as fuck or anything. Just because we throw an upbeat into a song doesn't mean it has to get silly, you know?

Rauri: I think there were a lot of people doing ska at the time we wrote this record and I'd hate to look like we were ripping off the big thing of the day. I was always more influenced by bands like The Clash's use of ska than even Op Ivy.

John: So much of that ska that came out a bunch of years ago was just so limp and lyrically devoid.

**American Steel can be reached at Amsteel@lkout.com
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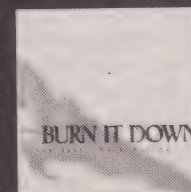
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United States Foreign Policy and Public Relations

By Amber Green

The Acceptance of the Oxymoron of Humanitarian Violence and the war against Serbia.

The war against Serbia has been a defining point on a number of levels: Superficially the role of NATO and the US has been defined. Significantly, the notion of Humanitarianism has been turned on its head to mean relentless bombing rather than feeding and sheltering. Perhaps most significantly, vague, subjective, and completely arbitrary emotions, rather than national interest, have been the chief justifications for military aggression, with these same emotions playing the chief role in selling this war to the public.

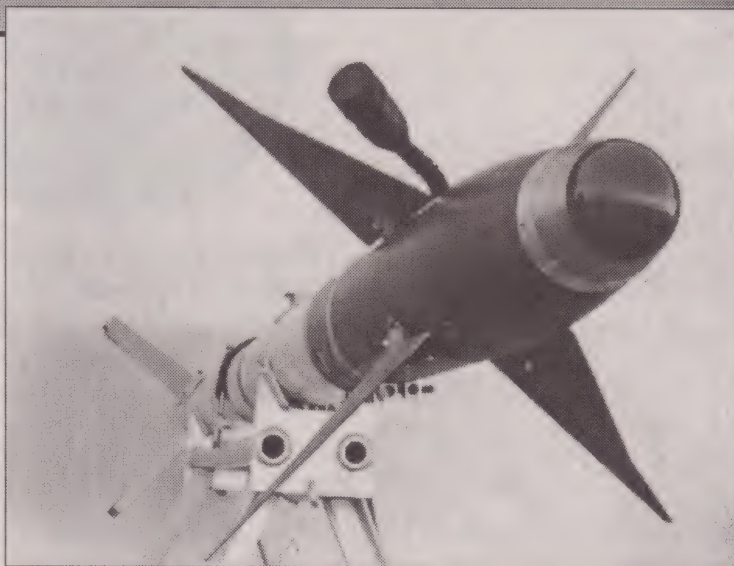
Unlike anyone in my acquaintance- including people in the hardcore scene and all my long-time close friends- my attention to the coverage of the war has been thorough and consistent, to a fault. E-mails to the wreck-age info box pile up. Social obligations slide. In fact, entire friendships are discarded with nothing more than vague surprise, as illustrated by an unnecessarily dramatic incident upon my homecoming from Greece. Some close friends stopped by two days after our arrival back in New York. Having so closely followed the war in the decidedly more politically interested climate of Greece for the first three weeks, and then having watched war coverage on all three cable news networks in a keen-minded although wired and jet-lagged state, I found it the most logical topic. A lively and I (obviously mistakenly) thought good-willed conversation ensued. When I said that 48 hours of obsessive news watching had failed to produce any coverage of Serbian victims of the carpet bombing (I have since seen some, although disproportionately few), my then friend without warning stood and shouted "Yes they do!

Yes they do! Of course they do!" and left the house (and her puzzled friend behind). I am not given to improper displays of intense emotion, and consequently such displays,

rather than moving me, leave me both confused and with a cold detachment.

More puzzling still are our relative attachments to and knowledge of the issue. The Balkans are my second home. Through our label I know a few Serbs and I like them. The concepts of ethnicity and the role of history in collective thought are familiar to me in a way they are not to Americans who are not recent immigrants or have never lived outside of the United States or have close personal ties elsewhere. I have had to hold my packages to Novi Sad and Belgrade because without any bridges they are undeliverable. I have been through Yugoslavia by car and by train many times. Most importantly, I am obsessively informed, following coverage from not only UK and US media but German and Greek media as well. My then friend, a person of education, intelligence, and inherent goodness, reacted with vehemence about a situation of which she has almost no knowledge and truly even less interest. This is the phenomenon that is the most interesting, and which points to the efficacy of the propaganda generated by the oxymoronic new violently moralistic liberalism.

What this means, is that otherwise critical, intelligent individuals abandon an interest in facts and are instead moved by a few stories and pictures of highly photogenic suffering to hold a strong emotional opinion favoring one ethnic group over another, and to totally disregard the suffering inflicted by NATO. The demonization of Serbs is a phenomenal P.R. campaign. Expressing empathy with Serbian civilians is like a vote for ethnic cleansing- so clear is the perceived delineation of right and wrong in a region of which almost most Americans have no knowledge, and where everyone has suffered atrocities through the history of the region. Another respected friend made the bewildering remark "I think that Madeleine Albright is truly deeply concerned about the humanitarian crisis in the Balkans." I thought I was in the twilight zone. I would like to offer the counter opinion that Madeleine Albright is indeed interested in the suffering of the Albanians, in as much as the selective media coverage of such suffering provides the P.R. cover she needs to ruthlessly protect the dominant position of the United States as the "only super-power in the world." (That is a direct quote, along with, the truly bizarre



"As Americans we stand tall"- on her Larry King Live appearance with Robin Cook to what might this be a reference? The only industrialized nation in the world that has the death penalty? Walmart? The statistics of shooting deaths, 100-fold of those of European nations? Columbine? The Jerry Springer show? The Iran Contra Affair? Indeed the list is endless) I will go a step further to justify my opinion that the United States with its aspirations of world domination is, in a word, evil. I will not subject any readers to the vague assertions about the insanity of the many educated liberals (my friends among them) of the American public. Let us move on to facts.

NATO was formed at the beginning of the cold war as an opposition to the Warsaw pact. It was formed, in the words of one of the many scholars and analysts covering the war, "to keep the Germans down and the Russians out." In 1999, we have both a united Europe, and no Warsaw pact, with some former Warsaw pact nations as new or aspiring NATO members. NATO on the then eve of its 50th anniversary was obsolete. That is, unless NATO redefined its role from its cold war origins as a defensive organization as per its charter that an attack on one NATO nation was an attack on all, to an organization of selective, self-serving and violent policing. The US is the largest power in NATO and is the head of NATO despite a Spaniard's being the secretary general. The role of the US in this campaign clearly bears this out.

The United Nations and specifically the Security Council should be the supreme authority in settling international conflict. That's what the Security Council is for-ensuring security. The decision to bomb Kosovo would by international law need to be brought before the Security Council. Permanent members China and Russia would have vetoed the bombing of a sovereign nation in the midst of a civil war with a *terrorist* (as defined by the CIA until before the conflict) army seeking to realize the dream of a "greater Albania", so the security council was simply by-passed.

A stronger personality than Kofi Annan would have called Clinton, Albright, and the chief NATO partners on the carpet for blatantly subverting the authority of the UN. Kofi Annan however is a weak pawn who made a perfunctory verbal wrist-slapping before whole-heartedly endorsing the campaign in words that could have been written by James Rubin himself. He has only recently redeemed himself somewhat by insisting that the rebuilding include electricity and water by winter regardless of who is in power in Serbia.

Add to this mix the lingering embarrassment of the Monica thing- with 18 months to go in the presidency, better to find a different legacy, and quickly. When that legacy involves taking the moral high ground in an issue with no immediate apparent benefit to the US (i.e. oil) so much the better.

The bombing of Serbia began after the Serbian's refusal to sign the Rambouillet agreement. The agreement, which was negotiated with the Kosovo Liberation Organization (KLA) and the Albanian Kosovars and then presented as a *fait accompli* to the Serbs, included the following provisions:

NATO had unrestricted access to the whole of Serbia (not just Kosovo)...

NATO was accountable to no one.

In three years, there would be a vote to determine to whom the province of Kosovo would belong. With Serbs the minority (10%), Kosovo, a poor province fed by Belgrade for deeply sentimental ethnic historical and religious reasons.

Simply put, Rambouillet was a set-up. Diplomacy is not defined by presenting a document that totally violates the sovereignty of a nation and leads to the nation's eventual loss of sacred ground (you by now know the province of the site of a battle significant to the collective Serbian consciousness and the site of countless monasteries holy to the entire Orthodox faith), and then saying "sign it or we will bomb you into submission."

The war thus accomplished several things important to the US and the Clinton administration:

NATO saves itself from obsolescence by transforming itself from an organization of defense to unchecked aggressor.

NATO effectively replaces the UN as the organization in charge of world security.

The US remains in charge of NATO, answerable in effect to no one.

The ego blow of a strong and united peaceful Europe that no longer needs the US militarily is at bay.

Instability is increased (great for the weapon industry).

The black mark of that embarrassing scandal is replaced by a lot of addresses about standing up for human rights and some photo ops with refugees.

That cynicism surrounding the words human rights might seem surprising but it is entirely relevant, since these words have been virtually redefined by this war to mean a justification for anything. Human rights by their original definition mean nothing to Clinton or Albright beyond being a perfect marketing point for their various career enhancing murderous campaigns are many. Here's just a few examples of how America isn't actually concerned with real human rights:

- The sanctions against Iraq, which have cost many their lives (by many I mean 595,000 children alone by the estimates of concerned organizations like voices in the wilderness). Madeleine Albright is famously quoted on this issue as having commented "It was a tough choice."

- The failure to recognize the human rights violations of our ally (and NATO member) Turkey against the Kurds, violations which cannot be compared to the pre-war status of the Albanian Kosovars. For example, unlike the Kosovars, who have Albanian as the first language on official documents, Kurds are prohibited from speaking their language at all. However, Turkey is also our second largest weapons customer, and this conflict is a profitable one for us.

- The failure of the US to show any interest in the prevention of the Rwanda Tutsi massacre of over 1 million.

- The fact that the US with advance knowledge of Turkey's plan to invade Cyprus (according to Kissinger in his new book) gave tacit approval and has done nothing to solve that refugee crisis in over 25 years.

- The bombing of the pharmaceutical factory in the Sudan, leaving thousands without live-saving medication. It was an error, which the US acknowledged, but there has been no offer to rebuild the factory, as people continue to die (Jimmy Carter's comments on this issue were concise and excellent.).

- Most tellingly, the failure of the US to intervene in any way on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Serbian refugees expelled from their homes by the Croats or even express sympathy for their plight. These Serbs are still unable to go back.

As a military campaign the attack on Yugoslavia was singularly cowardly. We had a lot of talk about minimizing collateral damage (collateral damage means, in addition to damage to structures of civilian and private use, death. Like the many teenagers killed in a bus when the bridge was bombed in Srdolija. 17 kids- that can be called an unfortunate incident of collateral damage

or one could take

the more realistic view

and see 17 funerals with 17

screaming grief stricken families lay-

ing to rest their senselessly killed chil-

dren. The Columbine victims' funerals were

live on CNBC- how would telecasts of the hun-

dreds and hundreds of funerals of civilians killed by

cluster bombs have affected American public opinion?

When asked at the daily NATO briefing as to why the

bridge was bombed at 11:30 am, a time when civilian casu-

alties would be an absolute certainty, and what in fact the

civilian casualty statistics were to that point, NATO spokesman

Jaime Shea had a curiously defensive reply which both entirely

evaded the question while attempting to justify the murderous attack.

He said "you want some statistics, I'll give you some statistics" and

proceeded to read the statistics of displaced Albanian Kosovars.

Retired Colonel David Hackworth has been one of my favor-

ite guests on the three cable new networks. The height at which the planes

dropping the bombs have been flying is 15 to 30 thousand feet, a height at

which you are as safe as on a commercial aircraft and from which it is

impossible to distinguish a military caravan from a refugee caravan. Someone

more cynical would call the pilots cowards but I will not. I think it more likely that

any American casualties would have adversely affected public opinion and

besides those aircraft are really expensive. In any case the decision to trade

security of the bombers for a huge increase in "collateral damage" to an extreme

degree was entirely conscious. Not knowing exactly who will be killed while

acting with the certainty that people *will be killed*, is still murder.

Wesley Clark, the NATO supreme commander (a title that in its tone bears a resemblance to "grand dragon") was more straightforward in his explanation of what collateral damage is and how it is approached under his command. He said in a live interview "We never *aim* for civilian targets. If we see tanks parked next to civilian buildings, we *aim* at the tanks. The building will be destroyed too but that was not our *target*. It is the tanks that are our target." The candor is admirable, none of that James Rubin dissembling. It also explains why the first casualties of the peacekeeping forces turned out to be the result not of uncleared landmines from the Serbs as first reported, but from unexploded cluster bomb fragments, *in a school*.

The oft-cited Geneva Convention (before the release of the three American POWs) states that the only appropriate targets are military, and that any targets which have a civilian or even partially civilian use, are off-limits. That is then all infrastructure- bridges, water and oil processing factories, electrical facilities and industry. The use to bombing Zastava (the car factory) or the cigarette factory is a direct violation of the Geneva convention (significantly never mentioned in connection to NATO's activities) and its military application is this: to apply "pressure" (Wesley Clark's seemingly innocuous word) on the civilians. In this case "pressure" means having no water or electricity or money or food distribution (or in nicotine addicted southeastern Europe, cigarettes). As to the Geneva Convention and the POWs- they received copies of it in captivity. Also they were so well treated that one of them said that it was kind of sad to leave their captors under these conditions of war (expressing empathy). Notice there were few live on camera talking appearances after that. The same POW wrote a note to the Serbs who had guarded him thanking them for their humane treatment "and for the cigarettes".

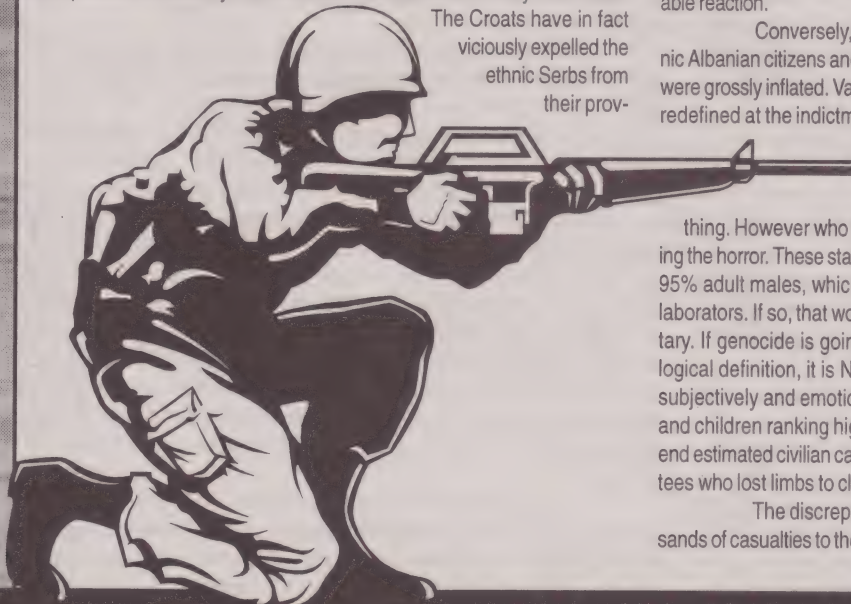
Collateral damage also took the sinister form of extreme environmental damage caused by the bombing of other illegal (as defined by the Geneva Convention) targets. To bomb a chemical factory and pollute the earth itself is, if you will a crime against God and the earth itself. Here is a recent report from the *Village Voice*:

"...Pekka Haavisto, the former environmental minister who heads the UN inspection team, says NATO has not been forthcoming with information. Fears are greatest in Pancevo, a city 12 miles from Belgrade, where NATO targeted a huge manufacturing complex, releasing toxic chemicals into the atmosphere. Mico Mastinovic, a hydrologist, told the *Chicago Tribune* that the array of chemicals released in the region is 'unique in world history.' According to a log he kept, NATO bombed the complex for 23 days. On April 18, NATO scored direct hits on facilities holding 1500 tons of vinyl-chloride monomer, 250 tons of chlorine, 1800 tons of ethylene dichloride and 15,000 tons of ammonia. 'Thousands fled the city, coughing and complaining of burning eyes, stomach upsets and choking. The fire raged as long as 12 hours. Nearly a third of the toxic chemicals went up in smoke,' Mastinovic told the *Tribune*. 'We have no idea what negative effects they will have on human life and the environment because we have no test analysis available. We can only suspect they polluted our entire watershed, the soil, and the rivers.' " (James Ridgeway: "Mondo Washington". *The Village Voice*, July 20, 1999.)

Among the many low-points of the military and diplomatic aspects of the war, the bombing of the Chinese Embassy which resulted in three deaths stands alone in both categories. The bombing was immediately called a mistake, but a mistake of what kind? Did the smart missile miss the target? No, we were reassured, the missile hit the target it was aimed towards; the error was an intelligence error. The Chinese embassy has been in that location for over 2 years. Before that, there was, significantly, nothing there. It is an intelligence error of the most indefensible kind. The refusal of the United States to hold an individual accountable (it was a "system error"), the timing of it and the department of energy/Wen Ho Li scandal, and the subsequent plea for funds from the CIA (look, we can't even afford proper maps) casts suspicion on the whole ugly incident.

I would like to take another look at the brilliant marketing of the new violent liberalism, or as the insightful NYC columnist George Szamuely put it "politically correctness enforced by military aggression." Firstly, getting the US and most importantly the US intellectuals (many Jewish) and press (again many Jewish) to side in favor of the Croats against the Serbs is an impressive feat. The Croats were among the most ardent of Hitler's allies. Nearly all of the Jews of the Balkans were exterminated in Croatian death camps. A more recent P.R. feat involves the Bosnian and Croatian wars. There were atrocities aplenty to go around, with the Serbs taking their fair share, although the impression created by US media laid all the atrocities clearly at their feet.

The Croats have in fact viciously expelled the ethnic Serbs from their prov-



ince, guilty of the same atrocities on the same scale as attributed to the Serbs in Kosovo. The only difference is that the ethnic Albanians are now home (and expelling their Serbian neighbors) whereas the Serbs of the Krajina are still displaced and will probably never be able to go home again. Getting the public to side so solidly against the Serbs is an important first step in their demonization, which was so vital in the marketing of the war against Serbia. An important side note regarding the Bosnian and Croatian wars- we have heard a lot about Milosevic's aspirations for a "greater Serbia". This implies an attack on the territory of neighboring sovereign nations. Actually this was a series of civil wars- the whole thing was Yugoslavia, and Bosnia, Croatia, and Slovenia seceded. Serbia's conduct was not always admirable in the conflicts, but was not other than what another nation would do, including our own. Serbia has never attacked a neighboring nation.

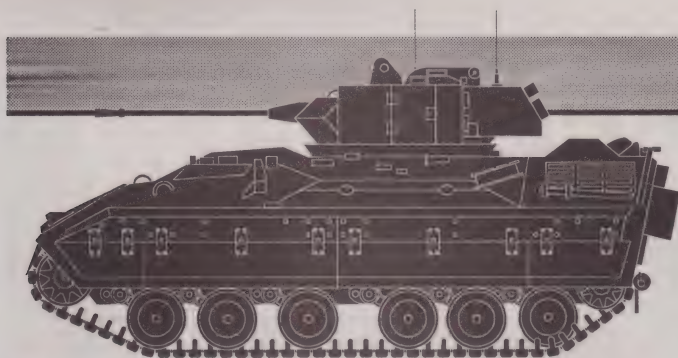
We have the appearance of political correctness and disinterestedness by taking the side of the Muslims over the Christians (the aggressors in the conflict, the NATO nations, being primarily Christian), but in fact there is a clear double standard that is the antithesis of "political correctness". Where white Europeans are involved there is military intervention. On the discrepancy in humanitarian aid- Africans are allotted \$0.11/day in refugee camps, whereas Albanian Kosovars are allotted \$1.23 (Jimmy Carter again, speaking to a humanitarian group).

We also have a huge double standard. Even by the vast majority of the reports of Albanian Kosovars, almost all of the atrocities were at the hands of paramilitary organizations, not the Serb army proper. This makes the atrocities, horrible as they are, entirely analogous to the atrocities committed by the KLA, before, during, and after the war. Highly significant is that the post war atrocities at the hands of the KLA are going undeterred. The Province has been nearly entirely purged of ethnic Serbs, approximately 100,000 people, in a mass and effective ethnic cleansing. The KLA has burned ancient monasteries and beat up 12 nuns (and raped the youngest). Isolated acts of looting, violence, and murder abound, largely unchecked. Gen. Michael Jackson, the commander of KFOR, said that KFOR's response to a recent looting and burning (in which the French troops assisted the looters by pulling their jeep out of the mud) was "not what it might have been". Any outrage is justified, by the press, KFOR, and the American public as being "understandable." An act of violence against a random member of an ethnic group because of ethnicity alone is simply a hate-crime, not an understandable reaction.

Conversely, having downplayed the countless atrocities of ethnic Albanian citizens and the KLA alike, the atrocities attributed to the Serbs were grossly inflated. Vague assertions about "hundreds of thousands" were redefined at the indictment of Milosevic to the number 340 (the *New York Times* cover article on the morning after the indictment). Mass killings, whatever the gender, age, and political affiliation of the victims, are a horrible

thing. However who the victims were goes a long way towards explaining the horror. These statistics were broken down to reveal that they were ca. 95% adult males, which could easily be 300+ KLA members and/or collaborators. If so, that would be paramilitary killing terrorist enemy paramilitary. If genocide is going to be defined by a body count, and what more logical definition, it is NATO who wins. If genocide is to be defined more subjectively and emotionally, i.e. *who are the bodies* with civilian women and children ranking highest, NATO wins again. The UN before the war's end estimated civilian casualties at ca. 1,500+. This doesn't count the amputees who lost limbs to cluster bombs.

The discrepancy that arose from the feared hundreds of thousands of casualties to the now fewer than 500 has involved some backtracking. Despite the discrepancy the reports are that the grisly mass grave discoveries are "as bad or worse than had been imag-



ined”.

Another double standard involves the mainstreaming and legitimization of the KLA. According to the CIA, the KLA is a terrorist organization (a point they've softened on since the NATO/US airforce became the airforce of the KLA) with ties to Osama Bin-Laden and is the largest heroin importer in Europe. How does this organization differ from the PKK (headed by Abdullah Ocalan whose capture- aided by the US- in March brought some of the first substantial news coverage of the Kurdish plight to the consciousness of US citizens)- the Kurdistan Workers' Party? Actually in telling ways. First, there actually used to be a nation Kurdistan, which the Ottomans conquered (along with Greece and Serbia, etc). Former Kurdistan is now part of Turkey and part of Iraq. Second, Kurds suffer a cultural oppression incomparable to the cultural freedom enjoyed by ethnic Albanians living in Serbia. Kurds may not speak their language in public, whereas in Kosovo Albanian is the first language on official government documents. Here's some more detail on the subject:

“Article 42.9 of the Turkish Constitution states that 'Aside from Turkish, no other language shall be studied or taught to Turkish citizens as a mother tongue in any language, teaching or learning institution.' Article 89 of the Political Parties law states: No political party may concern itself with the defense, development, or diffusion of any non-Turkish language or culture; nor may they seek to create minorities within our frontiers.” (As cited by George Szamuely, *New York Press*, July 1999). A harmonious and homogeneous Turkish state? Actually this is ethnic cleansing of the most thorough kind- the total eradication of any vestige of foreign ethnicity. The 1990 Serbian Constitution differs “...it guarantees ethnic minorities the right to official use of their mother tongue (article 8, paragraph 2); the right to be educated in their mother tongue (Article 32, paragraph 4), and freedom of religion (Article 41)” (same source). Thirdly, the necessity of oppressing the PKK and murdering the Kurdish civilians requires a lot of firepower, making Turkey an excellent customer (the other weapons they use to continue their illegal occupation of Northern Cyprus. Northern Cyprus is a “nation” that is recognized only by Turkey).

When a war is being marketed with the subjective qualities like empathy, the impact of Albanian presence in the area is a key factor, one largely underreported to the American public. I have heard from the lips of intelligent and kind people that “The Serbs civilians are likely fleeing because of the rapes and murders they committed before the war.” 200,000 rapists and murderers? Many of them elderly, whose final act in their province is to heartbreakingly and defiantly set ablaze all they have worked for their entire lives so the new oppressors do not profit from it? A phenomenal P.R. campaign has lead to such racist/culturalist assertions. These assertions speak not to Serbian military policy but to a perception that Serbs possess a singular capacity for wanton violence. They are alone among the worlds' populations about whom such a generalization can be implied without sounding insanely racist.

The marketing of this war relied heavily on such vague insinuations and assertions (indeed, only such a vicious people could deserve three months of relentless bombing- otherwise it would be we who were the savages) about the essential nature of the Serb people. Although it was stated officially time and again that “we are not at war against the Serbian people” we were at war against them in the most hideous way. In addition to the physical, environmental, and economic suffering they endured and will continue to endure, they suffer the tremendous stigma of guilt.

Not even in suffering do they elicit any empathy. “While Milosevic remains in power we will not spend a single penny for rebuilding Serbia.” Clinton has said to cheers, while Kosovo will be rebuilt. Why? Because of the ethnic demographic? We rebuild for the innocent Kosovar Albanians but not the bloodthirsty Serbs? And the Serbs who made up that 10% of Kosovo's population will not benefit from this rebuilding either- they have fled in an onslaught of ethnic cleansing that has systematically taken place under NATO's watch. Where are Clinton and

Albright now to proclaim “now you can finally go back to your homes!”?

Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon when asked about the mass exodus of Serbs responded “If I were a Serb I would get out of there too.” He softened this later only by saying it was not the official policy to cleanse the area of Serbs. This is ethnic cleansing with the stamp of approval from the Pentagon.

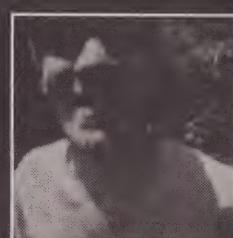
Conversely the plight of the ethnic Albanian refugees has excited unqualified sympathy, with no distinction being made between KLA members and uninvolved civilians. The refugee camps were in fact sometimes also the sites of great hatred and intense savage violence. The *New York Times* printed a grisly account of how a band of ethnic Albanians hunted down a 7-year-old gypsy boy whose family they suspected of being Serb sympathizers. The terrified relief workers just barely prevented the arms of the living boy from being torn whole from their sockets by a band of grown men.

Why focus on this hideous minority? Because the terror unleashed in the region by Albanians, irrelevantly a small minority of Albanians, is *highly relevant to the discussion on perceptions of the war*. It is the assertion and the constant insinuations that it the Serbs alone who have been the source of all violence and misery in the region that has been NATO's key marketing point. Actually it is a similarly hideous minority of Serbs, like Arkan's Tigers. Equally vital has been the suppression of the many vicious truths about the KLA. The consistent portrayal of the Albanian as victim rather than threat, and the Serb as violent oppressor is vital to selling the war to the educated but surprisingly uncritical segment of the American public. More accurate would be the distinction between crazed paramilitary (Serb and KLA alike) and totally innocent civilian. To make assertion about a cultural predisposition towards violence is very shaky in the prevailing PC climate. At least it would be if made about Albanians. Curiously, it appears acceptable to hold a similar view of the Serbs' cultural predisposition toward violence. The double standard so necessary to marketing this war appears once again. The truth is that almost everyone in this situation is a victim, and that Albanians and Serb families alike have suffered in innocence at the hands of Serbian and Albanian paramilitary and not least NATO and its bombs.

Three victories came out of this devastation. The tiny and poor nation of Serbia withstood three months of bombing by the 19 of the world's most powerful nations, and has retained their own sovereignty and sovereignty over their sacred province. NATO has successfully reinvented itself as the military aggressor under the guise of humanitarianism (humanitarians drop food not bombs) in Europe, answerable to no one. NATO's systematic defiance of the Geneva Convention- including the use of cluster bombs in civilian areas and the relentless targeting of facilities which have a civilian use such as factories, hospitals and schools- has failed to yield an indictment from the Hague. Clinton and Albright's victory is that they have managed to further the interests of the US by destroying a sovereign nation, pretending to have won the war, and taking credit for being the humanitarian saviors in a region where they have brought death, destruction, and massive instability while empowering terrorists. Their true victory is that we have already forgotten.

Amber and her husband, Pavlos, run a NYC hardcore label called Wreck-age Records which is consistently one of the best labels in hardcore. Check out their stuff.

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time in malta

by Ross

Construct and Demolish

A few weeks ago I went into Reckless Records on Haight Street in San Francisco to visit Dan at his summer job. Dan wasn't there, but a very nice guy who I had seen before with a lot of tattoos and t-shirts of bands on Hydra Head was there. We fell into conversation and he mentioned he liked my zine. He then proceeded to tell me that his band was really



good and I should interview them. Whatever, I thought, as I accepted the promo disc of the new ep his band had recently released. Needless to say, he was right: his band is really good. So after getting to know this tattooed guy, who shared a very similar type of musical taste to my own, I decided to take Todd up on his offer and interview his band. Beneath the haze of new-age music, coffee, and many crusty hippies I sat down with Time in Malta-- 3 guys poised to be huge in hardcore. Here is my talk with a band ready to take over the world.

Who's in the band, who plays what, and what is your favorite band from San Francisco?

Todd: Oh, that's tough.

Chris: I'm Chris, I play guitar, I'm a Capricorn, and my favorite band from San Francisco is... holy Christ... Help me out Todd.

Todd: Green Day, of course.

Chris: Probably Steel Pole Bathtub. Those first two records are amazing. Also La Pistola.

Sander: I'm Sander and I play drums, and mine is definitely La Pistola.

Todd: I'm Todd, I'm 28 years old, I'm an Aries. I would say that probably over the years it would be Neurosis. There are a lot of good ones, though, so it's hard to narrow my San Francisco choice down to just one band.

Chris: Yeah, I also love St. James Infirmary!

Okay, who wants to give me a history of this band?

Chris: I will. We started the band in '97 when Todd moved out here.

Todd: It depends how far you want to go back, 'cause we're all from Indianapolis originally.

Hey there's a good hardcore scene there right?

Chris: Well kinda. (laughter) Anyways, Sander and I moved out here about 4 or 5 years ago and we started a band with a couple of other people that never panned out. Todd finally moved out here in '97.

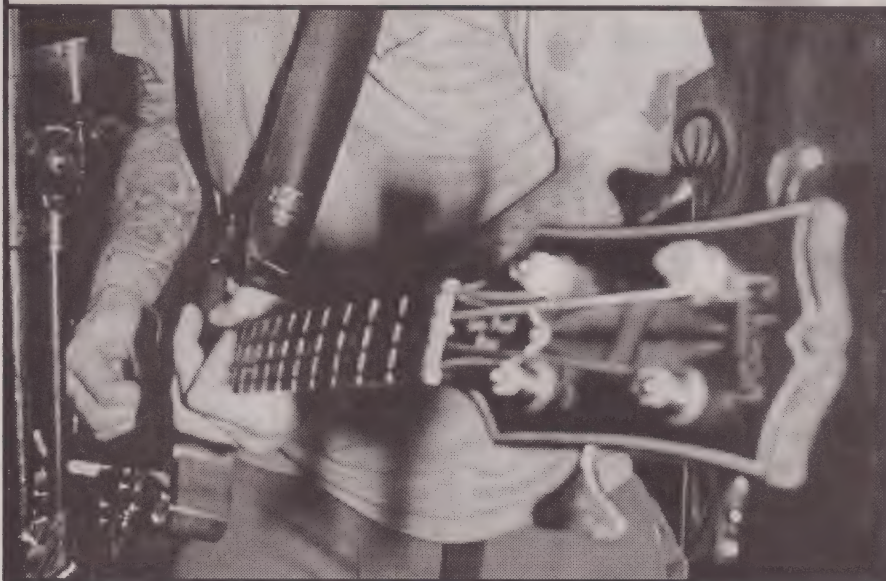
Were you guys all friends out in Indianapolis?

Sander: We all knew each other but we weren't really close friends. We all played in different bands in Indianapolis, so we had the connection through that. So, Todd finally moved out here and he started playing with us, and we thought that if he could sing then we could be a 3-piece. So it just kind of worked out. So we started playing together in mid '97 and actually started playing out in early '98.

How did your first show go?

Chris: It was awful. We played to like a few friends with the Hellworms and Wretch Like Me.

Todd: They told us to go on stage and there was one person in the whole place. So they said, 'okay guys, time to start,' and there was one person sitting at the bar having a





cocktail.

Chris: Then we've been playing shows up until today when our ep is just starting to come out. But, we had two demo tapes back then, one had two songs which we made just to get shows. Then a few months ago we did our second demo tape which we sent out to a bunch of labels and some bands we liked.

Todd: Yeah, we basically went through my record collection and sent the tape to everyone we saw that was good.

Chris: It wasn't even so much to get signed, it was more to just get our name out there and let people outside San Francisco know that we were a band.

Who'd you send it to?

Chris: No one really big like Relapse. No, we sent it to Revelation and Hydra Head and others.

Todd: We also sent it to Boy Sets Fire, Coalesce, Training for Utopia, Cave-in.

What did they say?

Todd: Well, we got a lot of really good responses. The guys from Training for Utopia sent us a really nice note and I still keep in touch with them. Steven from Cave-in told us he thought we sounded like Drowning Man.

Uh-huh. I don't know if I agree.

Chris: He said a mixture of Drowning Man and Groundwork.

I don't know Groundwork.

Todd: Yeah, I've never heard them either. But, we couldn't be like, 'thanks Steve, that's really nice of you but you're... well... wrong.' (laughter)

Chris: We got some really good responses, but the only label that really responded with open arms was Escape Artist.

Todd: Yeah, we tried Initial and Second Nature, but Escape Artist has the best taste. (laughter)

Chris: They called us, and if we hadn't gotten any responses by that point we were planning on doing it ourselves. I run Frenetic Records, so we were going to put it out on my label. But, that was just a back-up plan. Gordon and Adam from Escape Artist called us and we totally knew they were the right guys 'cause they totally had their shit together and immediately hit off a friendship even more than a business relationship. They were totally honest about where they were and where we were and it was a perfect fit.

Todd: Yeah, also for our first release we like being on a small label 'cause we get more attention and they're turning out to be a great label. They have a couple of really hot bands on it and they've really hit the ground

running. They have Burn it Down and Isis—

Didn't you used to be in Burn it Down, Todd?

Todd: For like a month. Actually I started the band with some friends right before I moved, then they continued and took it off running.

Chris: They were basically the leftovers of this band called Ice 9.

So, you're doing the exact same thing as if you had stayed in Indianapolis, by putting out an ep on Escape Artist. (laughter)

Todd: Well, at least now I'm happy. (laughter)

Chris: Indianapolis is a good place to retire or raise children, but usually retirement communities don't work well with hardcore scenes. (laughter)

Now, you guys are going on a tour in August. Is it a full US tour?

Chris: It's mostly east coast, although we're going to hit some places in the Midwest. It's a DIY tour. We booked it ourselves with some help from the guys at the label. It's mostly us just jumping on other shows that were previously booked. You know the usual: Piebald, Errortype:11, Torn Apart.

It's interesting that you guys are playing with Piebald, 'cause I actually hear similarities between you guys and early Piebald. It's definitely not like their new stuff which is very sing-songy. Their old stuff almost has a hardcore feeling while retaining the melody... like you guys.

Todd: We really have a small window of space to tour since we all have full-time jobs. We're trying to maximize our time and get in the most amount of shows before it's time to punch the clock again.

Chris: We really haven't done anything more than 6 or 7 days around the west coast before.

So are you nervous?

Sander: We don't really get too nervous about that type of stuff.

Chris: Yeah, we just get anxious 'cause we want to go already!

Well, we were just talking about the Cave-in accident. Are you guys worried about something like that happening?

Todd: Yeah, totally. It's not unlikely that it could happen to someone else what happened to them. I mean, their van caught fire and burned up all their gear and three-thousand dollars in cash! That sucks and they can kill a whole tour in an hour!

Let's talk about how you guys fit into the San Francisco hardcore scene. There really isn't a hardcore scene here except for the OBHC tough-guy stuff like Powerhouse, or AFI type stuff and you really don't fit into either of those scenes.

Chris: We used to fit into the St. James Infirmary type scene if you want to call them hardcore, but they broke up so that's that.

Todd: We had a lot of trouble getting shows around here at first 'cause a lot of the bands in the Bay Area that even sort of sound like us are power-violence, pop-punk, skate-punk, and then the Mission drunk punk bands.

Sander: None of the bands we play with are in our genre if you want to call it that. Most people out here don't listen to the same bands we might listen to or buy the same records we would buy, so they have no idea where we're coming from. Almost every show is just really random.

So when you guys play in San Francisco with a punk band for instance, what's the usual reaction?

Chris: Strangely enough we've had really good responses. A lot of people who come to see us are punk rock kids or crust punk kids or Ebullition punk kids— and I don't know if we're really easily comparable to the Ebullition stuff since we're not political and we really don't have the same feel as an Ebullition band— so it's strange that the reaction has been as favorable as it's been. We've never played to the exact audience that we thought we'd be playing to.

Who did you think you'd be playing to?

Chris: Not necessarily your typical hardcore kid with an H2O jersey on or something, but more of the hardcore type kids.

Todd: You know, the Victory Records kids. I guess I thought we'd

attract the post-hardcore kids. Although, once St. James broke up it was really hard for us to find any sort of show where any of the bands sounded like us. There was no one that was one step further than us that was along our lines that would let us jump on the coattails of and get some exposure.

Chris: We probably fit into the San Diego scene of the early nineties best with like the Headhunter or even the Gravity stuff. The first couple times we were down there no one really knew who we were, but as we keep going back more and more of the same faces start popping up. We think that the next time we're down south the record will have hit and we'll be a little bit more known.

Todd: Since the ep is really the first thing we've had out other than a few demos we really don't know what the response will be. I mean, we haven't even had a seven inch with which to gauge how well we're doing.

So what do you think, did the ep come out well?

Chris: Yeah, I think it came out even better than we expected. At first this record was supposed to be yet another demo, then it started sounding really good so we thought why not keep going. By that time Escape Artist had contacted us and we were on our way to finishing the thing so we just polished it up and let them put it out. We're really happy with it. We also know that the next time we record anything it's going to be even better. We'll have more time, we'll have more knowledge of how to transfer our sound to tape.

Todd: We actually recorded at the studio that Chris works at so we had a lot of time which we didn't even have to pay for. We basically finished writing all the songs in the studio. And, those songs have gone through so many changes since we are so anal and critical when we write. That's really why we called our ep "Construct and Demolish" 'cause that's basically when we do when we write songs.

Any plans for a full length?

Chris: Yeah, definitely. We've been talking a lot about what we want to do next, and we're going on tour as we said, but after that we want to continue writing songs for a few seven inches or whatever comes up.

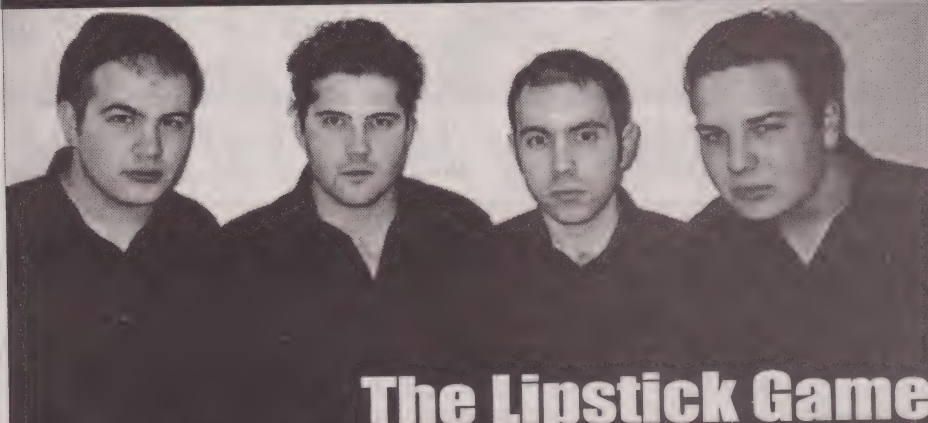
Todd: We've been in bands together before, but we really want this project to be really good— the best. We don't want to just throw a bunch of songs together just because some kid offered us some money to do an album. We don't want to rush and we want our record— when we finally do a full length— to be so damn good. You know, we don't just want the kids to like it, we also want to like it and be proud of it ourselves.

Time in Malta can be reached at Clyon@earthlink.com

Photos by Karoline Collins



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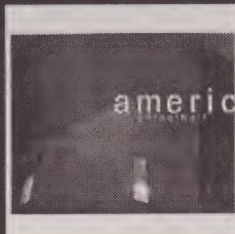
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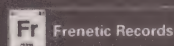
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STAR WARS

A Photo Essay by Jacob Futernick



Bobba-Fett stands guard outside the theater.



Now that "Episode I, The Phantom Menace" has faded from the Attention Deficit Disorder afflicted interest of our mainstream media, its time for me to put in my two cents on the whole ordeal.

The latest Star Wars movie is lame. There, I said it. Poorly developed characters, a weak story-line, excessive computer generated graphics, and possibly the most annoying character in the history of modern cinema, Jar Jar Binks, made for a movie that didn't live up to its predecessors or 16 years of anticipation. But you know what, I really could care less.

For me, Episode I was not about the quality of the movie. It was about the geeks, slackers, and working stiffs who waited in line for days if not weeks on end outside the Coronet theater in San Francisco to see Star Wars on opening night. I spent four days camped out on the concrete and with this article and photographs, I can only hope to convey a fraction of how much fun I had.

Where else but in a line for Star Wars can you find grown adults willing to coordinate a midnight rendezvous in Golden Gate Park for a massive light saber fight? Where else can you become a part of a community of people living out on the street and leave your stuff and your place in line without any fear of anything bad happening? Where else do you find members of a group called the UPS (United Pot Smoking) Jedis sneaking onto the roof of a movie theater to get faded? The answer is nowhere but Star Wars.

Every day in line, hordes of local TV stations swooped down upon us filming their segments for the evening news. None of them really understood or cared about the reality of the line. They were only interested in making everyone look like a bunch of losers through asking biased questions to only the die-hard fans. What they never quite understood was the true experience of the line; the friendships that were made and once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and excitement it created.



Theo Radcliff, age 9, was the proud owner of the very first Star Wars ticket. What a pathetic 15 minutes of fame.

A local radio station DJ shows off tickets to the unfortunate chumps in the back of the line.



Annikan and Qui-Gon face off in the parking lot. My money's on the youth of today!



Announcer: "So exactly how many times a day do you masturbate thinking of Jar-Jar Binks?"

Woman: "Let me check meesa log...."



Geek power in effect in the theater parking lot. Magic: The Gathering seems to be out while light-saber fights are the next big thing.

Meanwhile, at a theater across town....



Getting faded with R2 in a back alley of the theater.

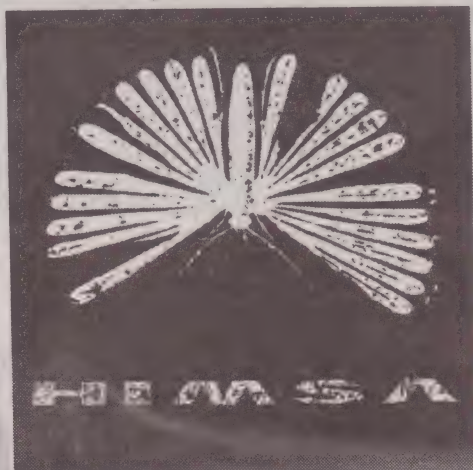


As the sun went down on May 18th, 1999, throngs of people, glowing light sabers, and elaborate costumes filled the parking lot while a sense of electricity was in the air. The midnight showing of "Episode I" was only hours away. Once inside the theater, it was utter pandemonium. The stage area became a frenzy of light saber battles interspersed with costumed fans racing laps around the theater. Before the lights went down, one guy got up in front of the crowd and asked his girlfriend to marry him, when she said yes, everyone inside went absolutely nuts. Once the movie started, I couldn't even hear the opening theme song because the ecstatic crowd was cheering so loudly. Watching those classic yellow credits roll and feeling the absolute excitement in the building produced the longest spine-tingling moment of my life so far. The movie itself no longer mattered, I had found what I was looking for.

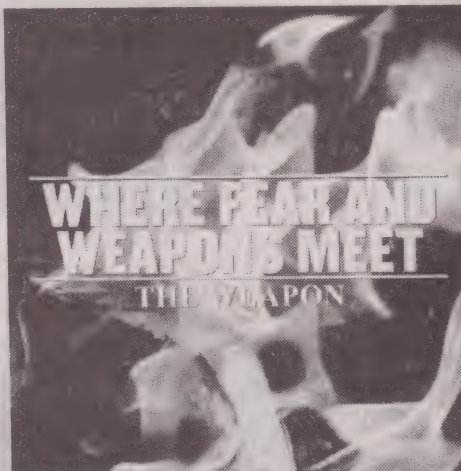


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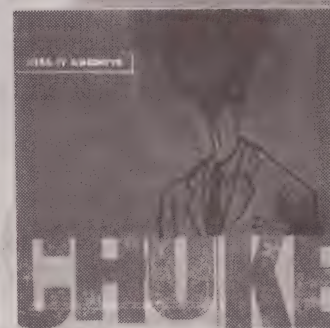
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Joey Spitfire

I did not really comprehend this at the time, but I led a life of convenience for four years that I spent in college. If you had asked me if that was the case while I was still in school, I definitely would not have agreed. That is because while I was in school the stress of tests and papers and all the other stuff that comes with college would have impeded me from seeing that I had things pretty lucky.

Besides the fact that your life is pretty much paid for by your parents, another aspect of college life that makes it so convenient is that you pretty much know what is coming next. I may not have been ecstatic about it, but things had become routine and, oddly, in that often tedious familiarity, came security. Also, I think that in college it is much easier to make friends. I mean, how hard can it be with thousands of people the same age as you in one place doing pretty much the same thing?

It has only been a couple of months since my 16 years of educational preparation for the "real" world (whatever it is that means) finally came to an end, but I already feel more lost than I ever have before. The security that came with college has been pulled out from under me and now I am supposed to figure things out in a world that really doesn't make sense. Despite this, I have still managed to feel relaxed. I have basically been a bum since graduation, living cheap and travelling around. I have become really lazy and I have failed to invest a whole lot of effort into my job search. I am not sure how to feel about that because I wonder how much it all matters in the grand scheme of things.

In high school, guidance counselors, teachers, parents, and other overbearing adult types pushed me to try to get into the best college that I could. For many people, the reasoning for that was that the better the school I went to the more money I would make upon graduation. So, at the time, going to Cornell and taking out loans did not seem like a problem. But now...I don't know. Somewhere along the way, I realized that I wasn't interested in money. Instead, I am more

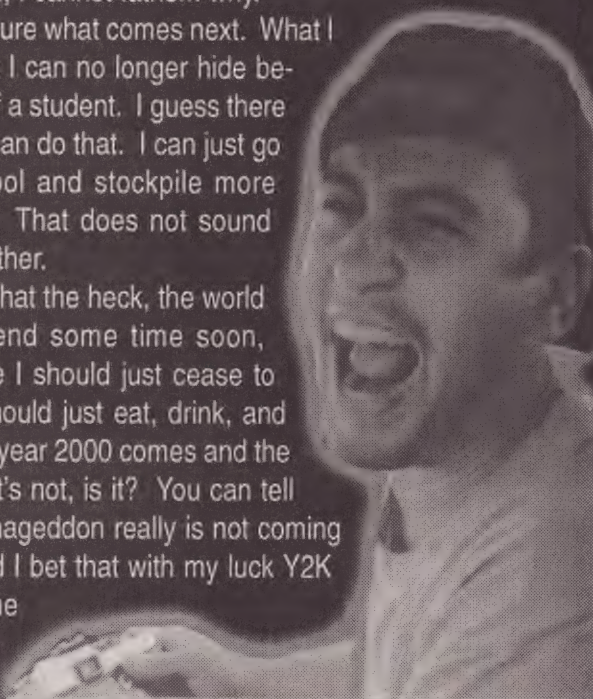
interested in righting some of the wrongs that humans have inflicted on people and the natural world that we are so inextricably linked to and dependent on. So here I am with a Bachelor of Science degree in natural resources with no real prospects of making any money, due to the kind of jobs that I am looking for. This would be completely fine with me had I not amassed over 25 grand in loans. Unfortunately, I did and now I feel trapped. I feel like I am locked into the system whether I like it or not. I have to find a job that funds me with enough money to pay off these loans and it does not give me a happy, fuzzy feeling.

Right now, I am just trying to relax and enjoy the last summer before I move in step with the green paper shuffle that is the "real" world. I have decided that the "real" world is a big farce and I have not even ventured my way into it yet. I guess that I should try to avoid being so negative and look at things in a better light. But it is hard because my new identity as a commodity does not sit well with me. Commodity, you ask. That is the only way that I can view it, due to the fact that I am supposed to now sell myself with resumes and cover letters and interviews. I think that I have moral objections to being a commodity. Sure, in actuality I am more than that. But when it all boils down, according to our capitalistic system I am merely a commodity—a center of productivity that can be assigned a price.

I keep searching through the want ads for the job vacancy that reads: "Wanted-Idealist. Recent college graduate needed to present ideas for the way that the world ought to be. Will pay off all college loans immediately." For some reason I have not spotted this job yet. Hmm, I cannot fathom why.

I am not sure what comes next. What I am sure of is that I can no longer hide behind the identity of a student. I guess there is one way that I can do that. I can just go to graduate school and stockpile more loans for myself. That does not sound like the answer either.

I mean, what the heck, the world is supposed to end some time soon, right? So, maybe I should just cease to care. Maybe I should just eat, drink, and be merry until the year 2000 comes and the big end to it all. It's not, is it? You can tell me the truth. Armageddon really is not coming after all is it? And I bet that with my luck Y2K will not initiate the collapse of industrial society either.



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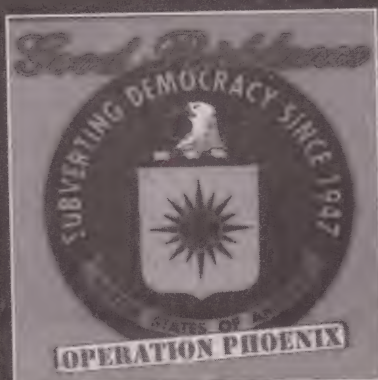
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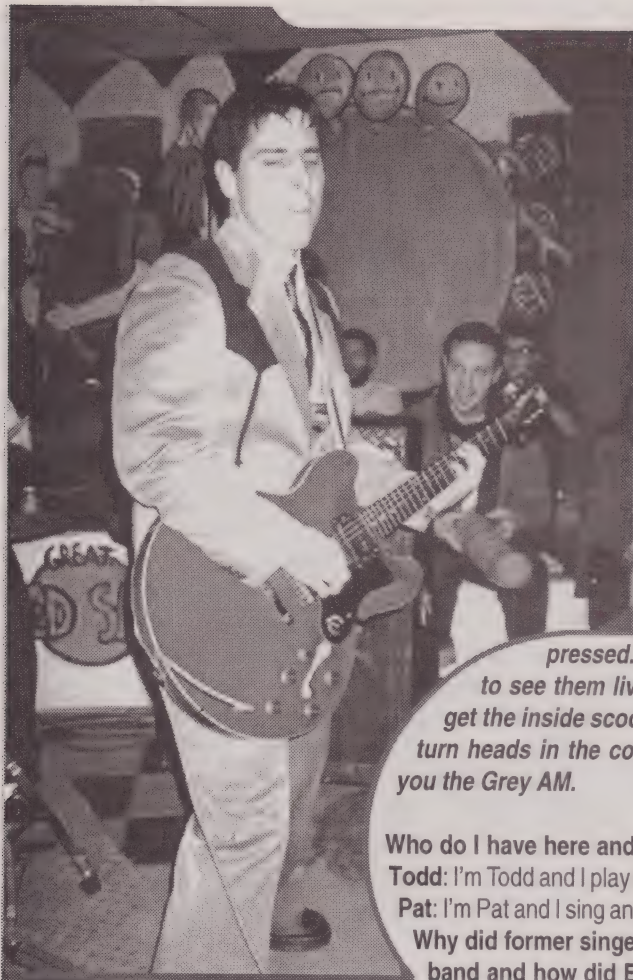


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The Grey AM

by Ross



A few months ago a friend of mine who works at Crank! Records told to check out a band he saw in LA that was "absolutely incredible." They were the Grey AM. So, when I heard this band was playing rather close to Ithaca just across the Pennsylvania border, I hopped in a friend's car and soon witnessed one of the most chaotic live shows I'd ever seen. A few months later I got their CD in the mail and was duly im-

pressed. After a failed opportunity to see them live again, I decided I had to get the inside scoop on a band that is sure to turn heads in the coming months. I present to you the Grey AM.

Who do I have here and what do you play?

Todd: I'm Todd and I play the drums.

Pat: I'm Pat and I sing and play bass.

Why did former singer/guitarist Walter leave the band and how did Eddie get involved with the Grey AM?

Todd: I think I'll take this one. Well, we were out just a few weeks ago on tour of the country and Walter—who's also known as Butch—decided he really didn't want to play with us anymore. It's not that we didn't get along, it's just that we weren't jiving together as well we once did. So he told us on the way home from the west coast that he was leaving the band. Luckily we had an answer to our worries, 'cause our roadie, Eddie happened to play guitar and we asked him to join the band. So on the way home, Walter showed him some of the guitar parts and now Walter is gone and Eddie is in. The funny thing about Eddie is that after Chris and I left Mid Carson July we had talked about just jamming with different people and Eddie kept reappearing as someone we wanted to jam with and it just never really happened. So before we knew it the Grey AM was started and we hadn't really played with Eddie. Now it's cool 'cause he's in the band.

Now, Pat you sing, so Eddie didn't take Walter's place on vocals as well?

Pat: No, actually I'm singing for the first time in my life.

How's that going?

Pat: It's going really well. A lot better than I thought it was going to go. As I said this is my first time. When we started playing with Eddie I started singing and I'm currently taking lessons. It's going really well.

Are you guys going to continue playing older songs that Walter sang?

Pat: Yeah, but I'm going to sing them. Well, we're going to do as many as we can, but we're still going to write new material.

Todd: Yeah, we've been writing new songs anyway, so we're going to keep doing the stuff off the album that's some of the first stuff we wrote and we still like it, but

we really weren't that mature as a band yet. So now we get to start all over from scratch. (laughter) The old ones aren't necessarily songs we're dying to get on the set list every night.

So Pat, did you help out in the lyric writing process with Walter?

Pat: Nope, I've never written lyrics in my life. This is a real experiment for us. Chris, the other guitarist is going to help out. Right now I can't imagine doing it myself, but with help from other people I think I'll get the hang of it.

Todd: We're pretty patient too. He's doing really well so far. I'll be honest, the first practice he sang out I kind of cringed (laughter), but he's been working at it and working at it and he's doing a really good job.

Not to start a bunch of rumors going around, but are there any hard feelings with Walter, or are you guys cool with him?

Todd: I would have to say that there's no hard feelings, at least not from anyone that I know of. We still talk to him and we're still friends. We knew that he wasn't a hundred percent into it anymore and he knew it too. He just decided to do something different. He was really cool about it, 'cause we actually talked to Eddie while Walter was sitting right there. And as I said, he showed Eddie a lot of the different parts.

Let's talk a little bit about your sound. Now, you guys don't have the kind of sound like, say, on the new Piebald record, where every note is perfect and nothing is improvised. Instead, you guys have a very crude sound which sounds like it could be quite spur of the moment and that tends to be a rarity in indie rock today.

Todd: I think we definitely go for a more raw kind of sound. Not that we want everything to sound like the album did, but we want everything to be a little bit raw and have more of a rock feel, as opposed to being really really polished. I mean, you can still do really good production and still maintain that edge. Like that Piebald record. I haven't stopped listening to it since I got it. And, although it is really really polished, those guys fucking rock. I don't think I would ever want to sound really polished.

Pat: I've never heard us sound polished, so I don't know. (laughter)

Not to be critical, but your album was definitely a different sound than your live shows. And I love the record, but there definitely isn't

the kind of energy you guys show live, 'cause you're one of the most energetic shows I've ever seen. Was that purposeful or did it just happen that way?

Todd: I think it just happened that way. We actually mixed the record twice because we hated the first mix. Everyone gave me their input and I pretty much went back in and mixed the whole thing myself in like one day. There are some parts of it that I would have done differently. It's definitely better than the first mix that's for sure. I'm not going to say I'm in love with it and I think it's a great piece of work 'cause I don't.

Pat: I think a lot of it was the recording budget. 'Cause we ran out of money and then lost money on the recording 'cause we had to pitch in ourselves. I think it could have sounded more polished had we had more time.

So do you guys have a new game plan for your future recordings with the new lineup?

Pat: We learned from our mistakes. We're going to go to a different studio for our next recording. I would like to capture a different sound, like a more energetic sound as you said.

Todd: Recording is like a cyclical thing. I mean, you do it and 6 months later you're either sick of it, you hate it, or you wish you could go back and do it all over again.

Well that's interesting 'cause didn't the band actually start as a recording project?

Todd: It's kind of weird. I left Mid Carson July and I had heard Walter play in a few different bands and I really liked his style. My initial response to leaving Mid Carson was that I have to do something different, but I didn't want to dive back into something

that I didn't want to do. Chris and I were into just recording some stuff with our friend Mike on bass and see what we came up with. There weren't plans to tour, just play. The four of us jammed for an hour and it just clicked.

Yeah it's weird 'cause Mid Carson sounds completely different than you guys.

Todd: If you listen to the first seven inch I played on that, and I probably wrote half the songs on "Minus Wings and Halo," but I didn't play on it.

So you guys just got off tour. How did it go?

Pat: Yeah, we did the whole country and it was awesome. You have your share of bad shows which comes with any tour, but people were generally really receptive and really nice. We all had a blast.

Todd: It was our second US tour and it was better by far. The wonderful experiences we had don't really have anything to do with music, like the people we meet or the places we went.

Did you see any national landmarks like the biggest ball of twine in the world?

Pat: No but we saw a 60 foot high Jolly Green Giant on our last tour. (laughter)

Todd: Oh yes, I remember that. If you ever get the opportunity to go to Rapid City, South Dakota, there's this park in the middle of town, and you go up on this hill and there are all these 20 foot concrete dinosaurs just sitting there.

It's stuff like that that makes America the greatest place in the world.

Todd: Oh absolutely. (laughter) That ball of twine is something to be proud of.

Pat: I'd have to say that my most memorable experience was when we were in Cincinnati we played a show in an attic, and there was this naked guy. (laughter)

Todd: Oh shit!

Pat: He just kept scaling the walls and climbing everywhere like Spider Man or something. He removed all his clothes and just scaled the house. We laughed our asses off. We're very entertained by nudity.

To change the subject away from nudity, people will tell me, "Oh I saw the Grey AM last night and they destroyed like 10 amps." Shit like that about broken legs and broken guitars. What's up? (laughter)

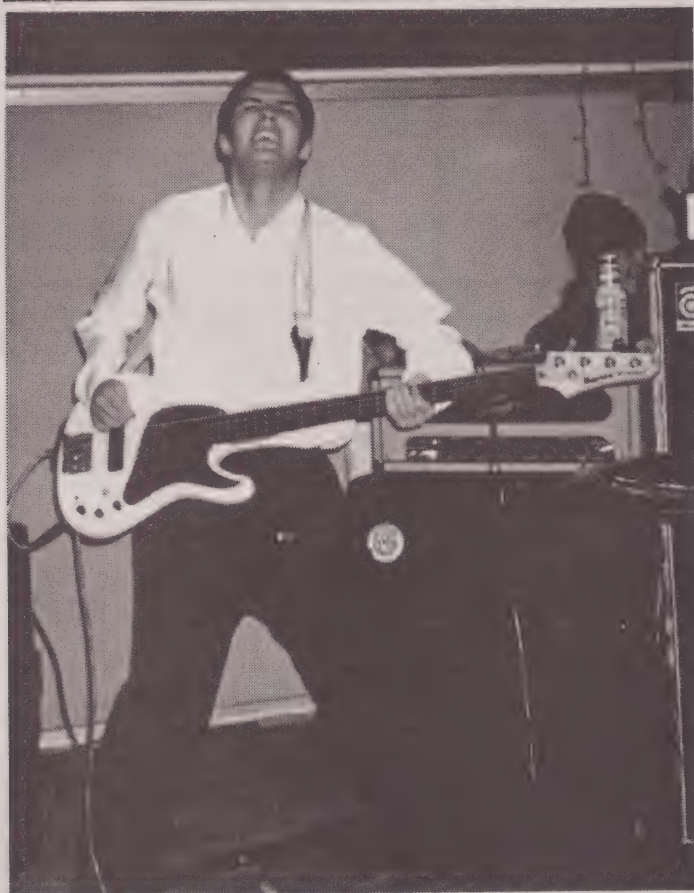
Todd: The element that was responsible for that is no longer in the band. It depends on the night, 'cause we're one of the only bands out there that actually makes a concerted effort to not break our stuff. (laughter)

I'd hope you would. (laughter)

Todd: The thing is, we get really into it and you don't even think about the broken crash cymbal until you're done and all the pieces are splattered around the stage. We've probably broken over \$1000 collectively. As far as broken bones, well, Pat got a nice bloody nose in Gainesville one time.

Pat: I hit myself in the nose with my bass. Don't ask how I did it 'cause I don't know.

The Grey AM's legions of fans can reach them at Greyam@hotmail.com



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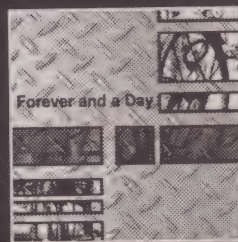
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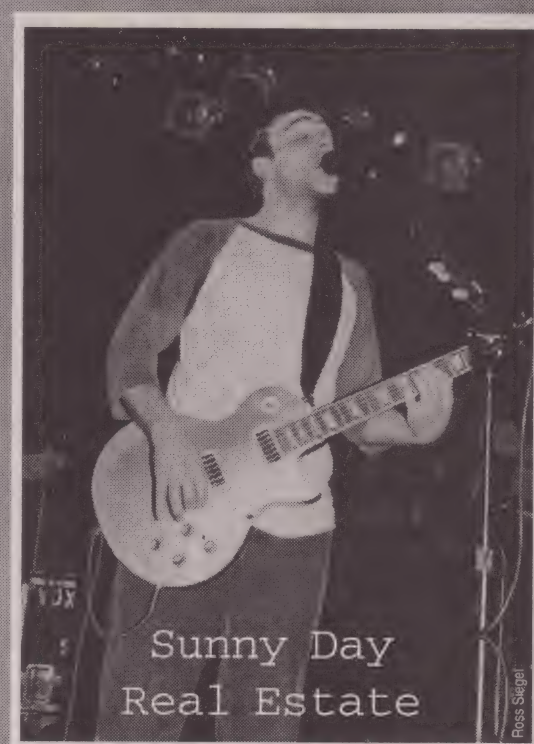
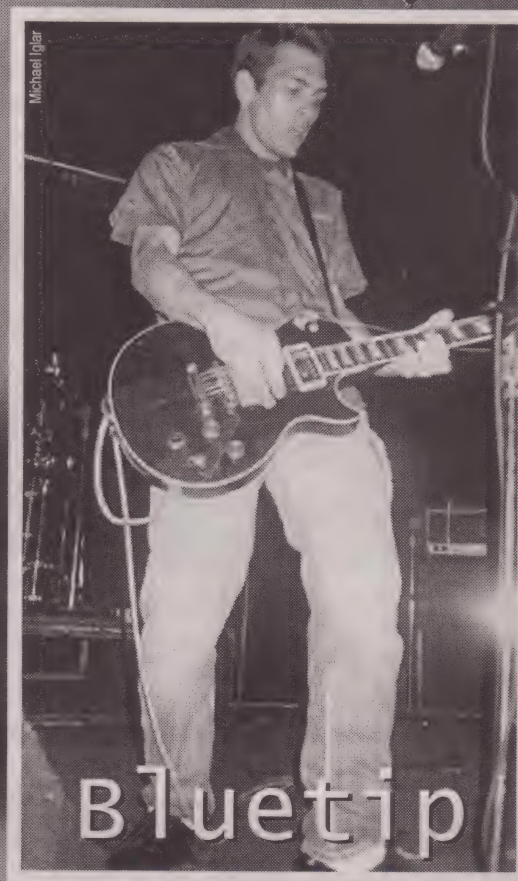
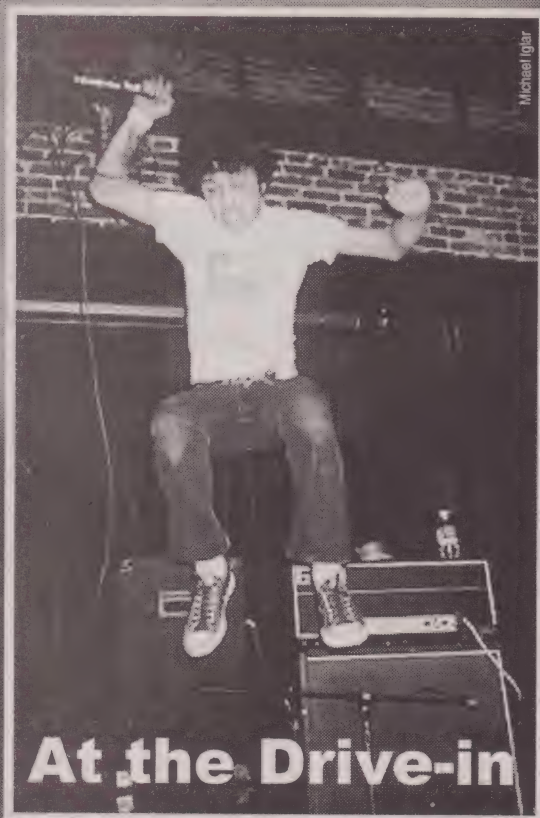
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Movie Reviews

Bulworth: 108min 1998

What an interesting Flick! Too much stuff going on at one time yet not enough. The jokes and the acting make it worth watching. But the story could use a little more... ahhh... I'm not sure what the word is so use what ever word you want to. Warren Beatty was incredible in the film. Man something about hearing Warren rap made me want to cry! You know cry in a good way! Go Warren Beatty this is your best film yet! No Fucking Joke!

Ultimate Fighting Championship Vol. 5 120 mins

This is without a doubt one of the greatest videos I have EVER viewed. If there was a UFC you had to see it would be this one. Tons of violence and top named fighting stars (Dan Severn, Graice, Ken Shamrock). For those of you who have no idea what UFC is all about let me fill you in with some info. The UFC takes martial artists and has them actually fight one another in a ring that is surrounded by a steel cage. I know it sounds like it would be fake or stupid or whatever. But these guys really go at one another trying to win the 50,000 dollar prize. This isn't a made up movie its actual guys fighting one another (its called shoot fighting). I hope that kind of gives you an idea of what Ultimate Fighting is. If you aren't down with blood and punching and guys on steroids I got two words for you: Jon Hess!

Clueless: Rated PG-13 1995

I didn't think I was going to like Clueless but..... I really enjoyed it. The story is complex and the characters are played very well. Alicia Silverstone was very convincing as a valley girl. And Her acting left nothing to be desired. Dude lets face it Alicia is freakin Hot with a capital H. Man I'd like to do some.... Ah umm yeah anyway. The movie really isn't about making fun of Valley Girls. But more so about how movies stereotype teenagers and how people grow and change. Wonderful movie. Go Rent it Right Now!

Basketball: Rated R 1998

I was so happy to see a movie about my two favorite sports Baseball and Basketball finally made. But to my confession this movie was mostly about sex, and crude jokes. I was kind of upset at first. Then I realized sex and crude jokes make me really happy. Damn I enjoy life. Yo check this movie out. My friend was watching it drunk and he thought it was dumb. But he was wrong. This movie is for sickos and freaks so check it out, especially if you're a sicko or a freak. If you are alone like one night and you are sad or something like rent Basketball because it makes fun of franchise sports! Yeah Anarchy. Oh the guys who do that South Park Cartoon made this film and star in it. They are some Naughty boys!

At First Sight: PG-13 1998

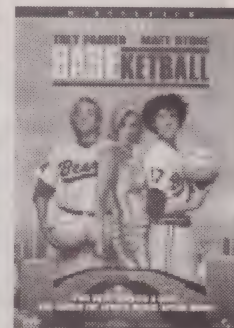
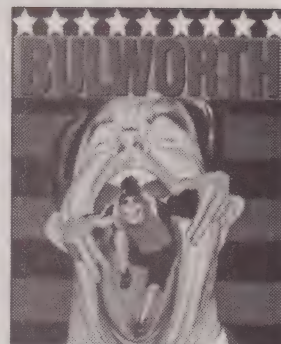
Mother Fucking Yawn! Val Kilmer played a great blind guy. But this story which was kind of interesting really lost track when it became one of those love movies. Yuck Barf. Mira Sorvino gets 2 stars for trying to act. But the idea of a man losing his eye sight then getting it back and having to learn to react in a world he doesn't understand would have made a much better film then some blind dude getting it on with a really hot chick!

He Got Game: R

Wow! This movie caught me off guard. I am not a major fan of Spike Lee but this film had an interesting (yet unrealistic) story. With wonderful shots and location shoots. When watching this movie I felt like I was swept away at times by the beauty of the some of the shoots Spike Lee went with. The story it self is about a young man named Jesus who is like this super great basketball player and everyone thinks "He Got Game." Well, it gets interesting when his father who is in jail is given a chance for freedom if he is able to get his son to play college basketball at a certain college. Blah Blah Blah! Just watch the movie. Its worth the three dollar rental fee. Word to Spike Lee.

The Tattoo Connection: 1998 NR

Naked girls and Kung Fu action. Need I say more? Oh ok Ross says that I should say more. Well, the movie has two of the world's top martial arts madmen. Jim Kelly (Black Belt Jones) and "Superhuman Beast from the East" Bolo Yeung. The story is kind of lacking. but the action is nonstop. Lots of punching in balls. Oh yeah and did I mention Naked Girls! Wooooo. Gotta love that. If you're really drunk one night and you need something to do. Rent Tattoo Connection. I mean it can't be bad since the company that put the film out is called Mack Video!



All reviews are painstakingly crafted, manicured, and polished by Justin the King of Prussia. Write him to tell him you want to sex him him or that he should not write for this zine anymore. llcoolmom@aol.com

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STATUS RECORDINGS

Zine Reviews, yo!

Zine Reviews, yo!

Badass Nation #4 (\$1 xerox-copy)

The three writers of Badass Nation proudly proclaim two things that makes their zine special in their introduction paragraph: 1) that they have a better sense of humor than most punks out there and if you don't have a sense of humor you should just put this down right now; and, 2) that they are participating in the scene in a way few people do by actually getting off their asses and doing a zine. I have to say, this is one of the most pathetic excuses for literature I've ever seen. I really like it when a zine does something really special that no other zine does, or at least has something original and poignant to say. This zine does neither one. Instead, it is full of various terribly written diatribes (that I'm pretty sure are meant to be humorous but are simply not) about fashion and punk—an article that argues fashion is essential to punk—, animal liberation (I'm not quite sure if they're for or against it, and some interviews with bands like Choking Victim. I think I can sum up the general vibe of this zine when BAN asks "What do you think about the kid who drank your piss tonight?" To which Stergin from Choking Victim replies "I think he's a hardcore Choking Victim fan." This isn't worth the paper it was written on. (1032 Goodwin Lane West Chester, PA 19382) **RS**

Black White and Ska All Over! #3 (\$2 newsprint)

I'm not into ska at all (in fact, I hate it), but I really think Ko and company have something that could be good someday going here. Clear, clean layout, mixed with articles like "MTV Fucking Sucks" and my favorite "What do you think will happen in the next millennium?" article, this zine could be really popular in the ska world given the right amount of promotion and will. The interviews are good, with bands like Slow Gherkin, The Aquabats, Mad Caddies. The one part that really did piss me off was when Ko complained that people from Epitaph and Fat Wreck never wrote him back when he asked if they got his zine. Give me a fucking break man. Don't you think we've all been there. If you're into ska, I recommend this. If not... I don't. (PO Box 477 Chappaqua, NY 10514) **RS**

Brat #8 (\$2 newsprint)

Everyone in high school feels alienated and oppressed. Some people throw themselves into schoolwork or sports. Some people write bad poetry (oh, the memories). Some people get really drunk or stoned. The people at Brat have channeled their energy into creating one of the best political zines I've ever read. Not only that, but they are articulate and unusually concise for high school students. This zine should be thrown in the face of parents and adults who underestimate teenagers and other kids who think that social action is stupid or a waste of time. Points given for having more articles than interviews with bands, though the Boy Sets Fire interview is a good read. "Brat: because your school paper sucks." Buy this for yourself to get some ideas or give it to your younger siblings in hopes that they also channel their energy positively. Where do I send money for a subscription? (PO Box 4963, Louisville, KY 40204-0964) **JM**

(em) #13 (\$? newsprint)

For a zine like this, that's on issue #13, I'm surprised I've never heard of it. (em) is a very good looking zine out of Portland that the guys from Boy Sets Fire handed me with their highest recommendations. This zine focuses on a lot of different types of music, but I think they try to stay away from the usual "who's in the band" type questions and opt to focus on one general theme for each issue. The theme of issue 13 is violence in the scene (and apparently some of the next themes will be entire issues dealing with food and cooking, "growing up" and staying punk, and then a scene cookbook issue... I'll have to see if to know if Jared can pull this off in an interesting way.), and there are very well done interviews with Karl from Earth Crisis and The Young Pioneers. Unfortunately, the interview with Jason from Kid Dynamite was pretty boring and short, and the violence-related interviews with Cave-in and Indecision were too short to really get into any interesting or important points. The layout is very clear and actually rather original much like LOI meets Punk Planet. Overall I give this zine a pretty good rating... although their record reviews were short and pretty bad. (PO Box 14728 Portland, OR 97293-0728) **RS**

Eventide #5 (\$2 offset)

A lot of trees must have died for this here thickie, but at least they

didn't die in vain. I'm usually bad at judging these things, but I wouldn't be surprised at all if this issue of *Eventide* broke the 150-page mark. Having 28 pages of music reviews doesn't hurt, that's for sure. There's also a hefty serving of interviews with the likes of Jets to Brazil, Jejune, Kid Dynamite, Mogwai, Sean Na Na, and so on, as well as some pretty decent if not amazing columns. The layout is competent and readable, although stylistically they're not doing anything new. While the zine is nice and meaty in most areas, it is conspicuously lacking in articles. I'm quite sure that the folks at *Eventide* are excellent writers; they've already proven this with their articulate interviews. But I feel like their talents are partially going to waste if they don't take more risks and go beyond the standard column-interview-review fare. (225 Riveredge Road Tinton Falls, NJ 07724) **DF**

Eye Candy #1 (\$? offset/pink paper)

This creative and fun zine is one of the best-looking things I've gotten for review in quite some time, which is really no surprise considering that it's done by Xanthe Hohalek, one of the most talented artists I know. Although *Eye Candy* focuses on art and graphic design, featuring quite a few comics and an interview with illustrator Michiko Stehrenbergen, it has plenty of unrelated goodies as well, including a series of pieces on record store clerks and how to be cooler than they are. I'm a little disturbed by how identical I am to Xanthe's stereotypical "Mr. Record Store." The best part of the zine, of course, is the "Gratuitous Tittie Spread," because, as Xanthe says "everyone likes to look at tits!" Seriously, though, Xanthe is a brilliant artist, and from the hand-stenciled cover to the cutesy illustrations, *Eye Candy* lives up to its name. (1251 Dolores St. San Francisco, CA 94110) **DF**

Hit it or Quit it #14 (\$2.50 newsprint/color-offset cover)

Recently a label rep at an important Bay Area record co. (who will remain anonymous) told me he/she hated this zine because of the gratuitous name-dropping employed in its articles and interviews. Although this is true, the name-dropping—taken with a grain of salt—is half the fun of this Chicago zine. I love Ms. Hopper's publication more than most zines, even with the name-dropping. And this issue does not disappoint. With articles like "Y2K & Indie Rock," "Vocabulary: round 2," and "The Price of Hardcore" how can you go wrong? The interviews are where the zine lacks, 'cause they're a bit short and some of the questions, while creative, are kind of stupid. I don't care what anyone says, this zine is always a good read (even if this issue did leave out the awesome gossip column it usually has). (PO Box 14624 Chicago, IL 60614) **RS**

Hit List #3 (\$3.95 color cover/offset)

This is the most polished and professional zine on its third issue I've ever seen. But, that's probably because Jeff Bale, a former editor of MRR, runs the show here. I don't know what he's trying to do here, other than make a much bigger and fancier version of every other zine out there, 'cause I really don't see anything in Hit List that sets it apart. You get interviews with a lot of people I've never heard of, like Russel Quan, Tony Slug, and Tesco Vee (?), and a lot of short/nondescript reviews of pop/punk records (there are even some major label reviews which in itself is a very different feat for someone who used to help run MRR. Well, I guess if you like MRR but always wished that it would be a little more open minded, better looking—no mention a little bit less relevant or urgent—then this is a good place to start. (PO Box 8345 Berkeley, CA 94707) **RS**

Incompatible #2 (CD-Rom)

I think this is the first time I've ever come across a CD-Rom zine. It was pretty cool, but it seems that if Punk Uprisings Productions was going to go through all the trouble of putting together a computerized zine, they could have made it even fancier. That's not to say that it wasn't good, 'cause it was, but I think they could have done more with what they had. There are interviews with Anger Means, Ann Beretta, H2O, Gamelace, and Saves the Day among others; as well as videos by Ann Beretta, Death by Stereo, Gamelace, and Saves the Day (who all appear on the music side of the CD as well). It was a bit weird that some of the columnists listed, from all the good zines except mine ironically enough, weren't actually on the final product. Strange. Maybe, something happened in pressing the CD that accidentally erased a few columns. Nevertheless, there were also photogalleries, a film by Jason of Kid Dynamite, record reviews courtesy of Muddle and I Stand Alone (which is kind of unfair I think, you know, borrowing reviews from other fanzines), and the other type stuff that print zines have. This is

cool and I would check it out at least to see what the 21st century will bring to punk rock. (PO Box 6771 Huntington Beach, CA 92615) **RS**

Muddle #15/16 (\$3 color-glossy cover/newsprint)

In some ways I am so impressed with this zine and think it deserves to be on the top of the indie-literature heap, but in others I think it's very mediocre. I mean, this double issue— which took them a year to produce—is thick as all hell, has over 500 reviews, and some clearly written and thoughtful articles. But it takes more than an ad from New American Dream on the back cover to impress me. For instance, almost none of the articles have anything to do with punk rock or the hardcore community in any way. This kind of sucks, 'cause if I want to read about why graduate school is unnecessary I'll read US New and World Report not a zine. Also, some of the interviews are border line ridiculous: the Joan of Arc and Jejune spring to mind. Of course, any issue of Muddle is probably the best three bucks you can spend in punk rock, 'cause the articles on Erik Larsen and why swing sucks are cool to say the least, as are the interviews with The Locust, Pedro the Lion, and Ink and Dagger. So, I recommend you buy this issue and be sure to take it with a grain of salt. On a side note, don't you think the Dawson's Creek thing is getting a little played out guys? (PO Box 621 Ithaca, NY 14851) **RS**

Nothing Left #9 (\$2 newsprint/color-glossy cover)

For \$2 Nothing Left is the best zine bargain there is... hands down. You get great interviews with 400 Years, You and I, Blue Ghost Publicity, Shawn Scallan, Kim Coletta, and Scott Fitcher, as well as the sampler CD with all the trendy bands, and more reviews than I know what to do with. This is one of those zines that has just continued to get better and better over time, and I feel like every issue you can see remarkable improvement. Original, interesting layout combined with great writing: this zine is one of the best ever I must say. I will really miss NL as they go on hiatus for the next few months. (PO Box 60100 Pittsburgh, PA 15211) **RS**

Obese #3 (\$? newsprint)

Sometimes I get sent zines in the mail that are a pathetic excuse for publishing. Everything from unreadable advertisements, to embarrassing layout, to an incredible amount of typos and editorial mistakes. The record reviews are short and non-descript, as are the embarrassingly uninformed interviews. This is one of those zines that better make some improvements quickly or throw in the towel. (PO Box 15499 Boston, MA 02215) **RS**

Pickle Patch #1 (\$? newsprint)

This relatively short zine serves to document the history of the Pickle Patch, an underground punk club located in scenic Santa Barbara, California. There are a number of short pieces by various musicians and others who have been involved with the Pickle Patch in some way, all paying testimony to a club that seems to me to be a highly positive-minded asset to what is an otherwise rather dreary and depressing town. Two things about the zine are worth noting: the first is the layout, which is innovative and pleasing to the eye. Steve really has an eye for design, and he has chosen a visual theme for the issue and carried it through beautifully. This thing definitely has the mark of an accomplished graphic designer. The second, and perhaps more important, feature of the zine is that it comes with a 22-song CD, featuring songs from Planes Mistaken for Stars, Atom & His Package, No Knife, and so on. I'm pretty sure this zine is a one-shot deal, but obviously some thought has been put into every aspect of its creation. If the actual Pickle Patch itself is as distinguished as this zine, then I'll make sure to check it out next time I'm down in Santa Barbara. (PO Box 14041 Santa Barbara, CA 93107) **DF**

Rats in the Hallway #12 (\$2 newsprint/glossy cover)

This zine is the muddled conglomeration of what would happen if the guys from Jersey Beat and Midget Breakdancing wrote a fanzine. Except, unlike Jersey Beat covering the Jersey scene, Rats in the Hallway seems to focus on the Colorado scene (a la Suburban Home Records). There were some good writings and articles here, although they were nothing to write home about. Also, the reviews were definitely above average and not as short and nondescript as the style for reviews seems to be these days.

Zine Reviews, vol. 1

Zine Reviews, yo!

The interviews with bands like Oxymoron, Winston Smith and other people/musicians I've never heard of were pretty boring, but that could just be because I have heard of only a few bands in this zine. Honestly, I think there is nothing that sets this zine apart from a zine like Midget Breakdancing (except for RITH's glossy cover), and the zine is not as much a punk rock authority as Jersey Beat is, so I was not impressed with this one. And the name of the zine is so strange too. (PO Box 7151 Boulder, CO 80306) **RS**

Rocket-Fuel Aug 1999 (online web-zine)

Courtney and Co. bring you another addition of the only zine other than Punk Planet to have a press publicist. This much hyped site has definite pluses that can only be found in an organic zine (which is pretty much only possible when that zine is online), such as up to the minute reviews, columns, and interviews. I think this e-zine is done really well, and you have to give them props for being the first/biggest zine in the online field. But I have a few problems with Rocket-Fuel: the site is kind of hard to navigate and the site-map at the top of each page is even harder to read; with an online site the potential to do millions of reviews is even more prevalent than with a printed zine... yet there were only about 30 reviews posted on this site. That sucks, I want a review of the new At the Drive-in EP damnit. This zine has the potential to reach so many people, do so many features at one time (since space and size are negligible), and cover areas of indie rock not often covered by the standard zine world. Yet, they do not. Instead they opt to only feature reviews of CDs and interviews with bands who are on hip, more prominent labels. I think Rocket-Fuel has a ways to go before I come back regularly. Although, nice job at being pioneers. (www.rocket-fuel.com) **RS**

Scanner #4 (offset/half-size)

This zine may be half-sized, but it's fairly thick and its economical layout allows for a whole lot of print to be crammed in. *Scanner* definitely belongs in the *MRR* school of zines, featuring *MRR*-style columns and a series of interviews with Bluetip and a number of bands that I've never heard of (which may be attributable to the fact that *Scanner* is a British zine). The zine is pretty much singularly focused on music, eschewing the various cultural and political articles that many indie rock zines print alongside their music coverage. However, there are some interesting articles about mercy killings and Dracula. This isn't bad at all. (6 Chatsworth Dr. Rushmere Park, Ipswich Suffolk, IP4 5XA, UK) **DF**

Second Choice #4 (\$? newsprint)

I remember reading and reviewing issue 2 or 3 of this zine from New Jersey and being less than impressed. Although the zine is getting noticeably better it still has a long way to go before I will go out of my way to find it. I mean, the interviews with bands like Fastbreak, Speak 714, Avail, and H20 are pretty good but are so short they don't even scratch the surface of any real informational breakthroughs on those bands. One turn off is that the amount of pages taken up by ads in this zine is about equal to actual editorial content. There are a few good pictures here which are always cool, and other than a few pages of mediocre reviews there isn't much else. I guess this is a good start for some zines, but when you're on issue #4, I expect at least some variation, much less originality. (PO Box 7067 Hackettstown, NJ 07840) **RS**

Shut Your Fucking Mouth #1 (\$1 newsprint)

I can hardly claim objectivity when I'm reviewing a zine that my co-editor does a column for, so instead of mincing words I'm just going to come right out and tell you that you should check out the impressive first issue of this zine, if only for the fact that Ross has a column in it. Save for a couple record reviews in the back of the zine, which almost feel like an afterthought, *Shut Your Fucking Mouth* is essentially a series of columns by various zineland celebrities (Ryan of *Hanging Like a Hex*, Peter of *Skyscraper*, etc.), many of them dealing with that ages-old question: what is punk? And how has the punk community chosen to define itself? Visually, the zine follows a pretty standard cut-and-paste philosophy, and it isn't a whole lot to look at. But the columns, while not all excellent, have a pretty high signal-to-noise ratio, and the zine reads like a veritable who's-who of the indie rock world, save for the fact that I don't see my name mentioned! Anywhere! Strangely enough, the most interesting column here has nothing whatsoever to do with building a punk

community; it's an article about why Courtney Cox is anorexic. (address unavailable) **DF**

Skyscraper #5 (\$3 newsprint/color-glossy cover)

I've been having an ongoing dialogue with Peter who co-publishes this zine with his brother Andrew. It seems that while *Skyscraper* and *Law of Inertia* are both relatively well-respected and up-and-coming zines in the scene we have very different approaches to what makes a good zine. This does not necessarily mean we are opposites in style and aim, 'cause in the end we both want to make a good product. But, *Law of Inertia* and *Skyscraper* are on opposite ends of the spectrum as far as content. A few examples: 1) while *LOI* prefers concise, informative interviews that tell a lot in 2 or 3 pages, *Skyscraper* prefers 6 page interviews that are not concise. They are informative, mind you, but in *Skyscraper* you need to read the whole damn interview to gain any new perspective on the bands in question. And they're so damn boring! 2) *LOI* loves good live photos that are clear and dynamic to decorate pages, while *Skyscraper* seems to only use blurry/dark shots in their zine. 3) *LOI* strives to have first class graphic design to keep the reader interested as well as create a professional and interesting zine. *Skyscraper* could care less about any sort of interesting layout. This is bare bones people, and it looks terrible. 4) *Skyscraper* prefers long reviews of records and zines that use lots of flowery language and never really give a very concrete opinion of the records in question, while *LOI* prefers shorter and wittier reviews that let the reader know exactly how we feel about the subject. Don't get me wrong, when you get past the drudgery, *Skyscraper* is an okay zine with some good information in tow, but overall I think that a succinct interview with bands like Mudhoney, Jon Spencer, and Thumbnail is much preferred over 6 pages of who-gives-a-shit. (PO Box 4432 Boulder, CO 80306) **RS**

Slave #2 (\$1 newsprint)

As much as I want to just run out and shout the praises of this zine, I do have some distinct problems with it. To start with, the music covered here is hardcore. Not much punk. No indie. Just hardcore, with an emphasis on the metal-sounding stuff. If that's your thing, this is great. If you like a little variety (count me in), the music coverage tends to get a bit boring. The interviews in this also are a little mundane; I'm not saying they're bad, they're just average. Now on the good hand, this guy is all about politics. There's bits on Cuba, Black Autonomy International, and terrorism art (among others). Maybe I'm just excited to see another individual who isn't afraid to mix music and politics; it is becoming more rare these days... Despite the few problems I have with this, I would pick it up again. It helped kill time on the bus ride to school, what more can I ask for? (PO Box 10093, Greensboro, NC 27404) **JM**

Sliver #5 (\$3 offset/color-glossy cover)

Here lies the last issue of what was probably the best zine in aggressive rock music. At first glance, *Sliver* may look nothing more than the slickest-of-the-slick zines out there, but when one actually reads the interviews and articles, one realizes that *Sliver* is written with the utmost care and thought. Although there are some bands interviewed in this issue that I do not think deserve grass-roots level attention, like Fear Factory and Slayer, the articles on Harvest, Samiam, Avail, and Elliott more than make up for it. I can't say enough good things about *Sliver*. I guess what I can say is that it is too bad that so many people involved in indie rock do not go out of their way to buy zines and support the real creative outfits that operate on a DIY level in your hometown. It is too bad Grail, *Sliver*'s mastermind, could not afford to keep this thing going, and it is too bad most people don't know real genius when they see it. (27 Commercial Street Gloucester, MA 01930) **RS**

Status #9 (\$3 (offset/color-glossy cover)

First off, it's good to see a zine on issue #9. This gives me hope that maybe I'll be able to turn *LOI* into a venture that does not lose so much money in the future. Anyways, *Status* is a zine that employs much the same look and feel of *Second Nature* (although the design is a bit more sparse). I really want to like this zine 'cause it seems very professional, and with pretty good interviews with Jen Wood, Treadwell, Rocky Votolato (of Waxwing), Jets to Brazil, and Fugazi among others, my opinion is heightened a bit (although, the editor Seth has this annoying habit of asking half good questions and half questions that have no point or relevance at all). However, there is nothing in this zine

that differentiates it from other zines. I mean, there are no articles or anything other than the mandatory zine stuff like reviews and interviews. Furthermore, the record reviews are terrible. I totally expect more descriptive/better written reviews in zines of this size (whoever Collin Ross is should be fired from the *Status* review staff). I guess, this zine is worth it to read some cool stuff on bands that aren't often focused on in the upper echelons of the zine world, but to be honest this zine isn't all it's cracked up to be. (PO Box 1500 Thousand Oaks, CA 91358) **RS**

Sullivan #1 (\$1 newsprint)

Yet another publication just starting out, and it is clear that they have some hurdles to get past in order to be a truly good zine. Some little pitfalls that are clearly due to inexperience are very dark images. This zine explicitly states that they wanted to create a zine that covers more than music. I think they did this, but they sacrificed quality when they did as the musical aspects of this zine make up the most interesting parts. There are very short, very uninformative interviews with Jets to Brazil and Drain Bramaged, some run-of-the-mill poetry, a lot of skating pictures (there are so many that I am led to wonder why they are there), some misc. photography, and a few short and uninformative reviews. Don't get me wrong, with experience and time, I think this zine could develop into something worth checking out, but as for now, it needs a lot of work. (306 N.W. EL Norte Pkwy. PMB 305 Escondido, CA 92026)

Take the 1st #1 (free/Xeroxed)

I can't say that *Take the 1st* is of the same caliber of, say, *Muddle*. After all, it's five pages long, Xeroxed, and there are probably only fifty copies of it in existence. But *Take the 1st* has one big advantage over any big glossy indie rock zine you can name, and that's that it's done by all my close friends. So, nepotism aside, I feel obliged to say that even if this zine may only be a five-minute read, it'll still be a pleasant five minutes. A few rants about intolerance of musical styles, "people reviews" (the next inevitable step after zine and record reviews) and a drawing or two. Want a copy? Good luck. **DF**

Wonka Vision #6 (\$1 newsprint/color cover)

The last issue of *Wonka Vision* made for entertaining bathroom reading, even if it wasn't exactly up there with Camus and Dostoyevsky. Issue #6, however, is pretty much devoid of the so-stupid-you-have-to-laugh brand of humor which used to be the zine's saving grace. Now all we have is some poorly written columns, interviews with bands like the Boils and Public Urination, and an abundance of short, quasi-humorous blurbs about this and that. It doesn't make for particularly provocative or memorable reading. (206 Twining Ford Rd. Richboro, PA 18954) **DF**

Zum #11 (\$2 offset/brown cardstock cover)

My Sister has been friends with George, one of the co-editors of this zine for some time now. My sister, whose usual zine taste ranges from Outpunk to Chickfactor, are quite different than mine so I concluded that *Zum* would be just another hipster zine. What I found when George handed me a copy of this publication at a Time in Malta show was a zine with one of the most unusual foci I've ever seen (not to mention one of the most creative covers I've ever seen). *Zum* generally covers indie rock, with interviews with Rebecca Gates of the Spinanes, Ativan, and Kid Koala. But they also throw in interviews with DJ crews like the X-ecutioners, and bands you do not usually find in a zine. The interviews are really well done and show a vast knowledge of each of the bands. But what really makes this zine the quirkiest/smarest zine I've seen in a while are articles like "My love affair with music for adults," and the Simple Machines Fest report. Bravo. My one complaint is that in the record reviews section, *Zum* seems to feel that different=good is an axiomatic truth which I whole-heartedly disagree with. Oh yeah, and the layout is really really boring, but this also comes with a sampler CD including bands like Dianogah, Songs: Ohia, Sterling Silver, and Jen Wood, so you get your money's worth. (PO Box 4449 Berkeley, CA 94704-0449) **RS**

Track Attack

The LOI Record Review

Staff is:

Ross Siegel: RS

Dan Frantic: DF

Jason Murphy: JM

Pablo RockAfucker: PR

Dean Proserpio: DP

Disclaimer to everyone that sent us records: Ever since our zine became good (i.e. last week) we have been inundated with records for review. So, if your record is not reviewed here it is merely because we got some much stuff that we couldn't fit all of it in for review. Don't worry, we will review your stuff but you'll just have to wait a while. Feel free to send stuff earlier than later to guarantee a review. Also, we can't afford to send copies of this issue out to every label/band that sent us a record. It would cost a freakin' fortune. So, if you want a free copy of the zine feel free to buy an ad. Thanks— the management.

30 Foot Fall "Never Revolving, Never Evolving" (Nitro) CD- Um, I don't understand the cover art. On that note everyone's least favorite Texas punk band that wishes Joe Queer and Fat Mike had started a band together and called it Queer-FX (I am so damn funny!) is back. So here we get 15 punk songs that are fast, obnoxious, and in-your-face as hell. 30 Foot Fall play some of the most juvenile music I've since I went to see a San Francisco punk band called the Jocks (who, oddly enough, were pretty good) over spring break. They poke fun at/cover songs like "Tubthumper" by Chumbawamba, "Just Like Heaven" by The Cure, and again oddly enough they serve to amuse. To make a long story short, 30 Foot Fall were a good listen while I sent out e-mails to distributors who owe me money, but now it's going straight to the used record store to make up for the cash I'm owed by my distributors. RS

30 Lincoln "Avanti" (Johanns Face) CD- We got this CD a little while before issue #5 came out and I gave it a few unenthusiastic listens. So now I come back to 30 Lincoln and damn am I impressed. 30 Lincoln sound like the mutant hybrid of Nation of Ulysses and Rocket from the Crypt. You know: that screamy/whiny singing that I did in NOU combined with the balls out blues/punk guitar assault that made RFTC a great band. This is catchy, fun, and great to listen to while wearing flood-pants and your coolest Clash T-shirt. RS

77 "Revolution Rock" (Elevator Music) CD- Elevator Music is one of the very few music labels based out of my current home state of Connecticut, but the 77 most certainly isn't a local band for me, seeing as how they hail from Portugal. I've heard Italian punk before, French punk, Argentinean punk, Japanese and Israeli and German punk, but this is the first time I've ever heard a punk group from Portugal. Since I have very little knowledge concerning the social structures in Portugal I don't feel privileged to hypothesize about the level of popularity—or acceptability—of punk music there, but judging from the liner notes, I'm guessing that to play punk rock music in Portugal is a gutsy move, and the political nature of the lyrics (which, incidentally, are

in English) leads me to believe that the 77 is one of those bands that walks the walk in addition to talking the talk. Their name is appropriate, too; they play '77-style punk that sounds somewhat like a cross between Eater and the Clash, with similar recording quality to boot. As an American I feel like my ears have been thoroughly saturated with this type of music, but in Portugal I'm sure it's much less common, and I applaud the 77 for having the guts—and the ability—to pull it off. DF

88 Fingers Louie/Kid Dynamite (Sub City) CD- One of punk's biggest names (circa 1994) join forces with one of punk's best names (circa now) on this benefit CD for Multiple Sclerosis. Each band gives three songs, and I must admit everything on this disc is solid. But—and I never thought I would say this—the real winner here is 88 Fingers Louie who kick out three heartfelt punk-core tunes that harken back to the days when Lagwagon and No Use For A Name were credible bands. The KD tunes are damn good too (although songs like "Never Met the Gooch," or "Fuck U Turn" off their Jade Tree full length surely blow these away), but they are over shadowed by the beginning of the disc. This is definitely worth 6 or 7 bucks. RS

AFI "Black Sails in the Sunset" (Nitro) CD- When I was 16 an AFI show at Gilman Street was possibly the best way in the world I could have spent \$5. Now I'm older and wiser and I like to think my music styles have matured. That is why I wasn't too crazy about AFI's second and third records which (ironically enough) really catapulted them into the national hardcore scene. I thought they were torn between a great punk band and a mediocre hardcore band, so I all but ignored them. Then I got this CD in the mail and, after noticing some lineup changes, popped it in my discman to find that AFI are really maturing into a unique and powerful hardcore band. This CD ain't half bad. Davey still has his high-pitched tenor, which I think has always been one of the best voices in hardcore, yet there seems to be more to this recording than their last two outings. AFI have written some breakdowns and shoutouts on this record which rival any band in hardcore. Not to mention the last song on the disc, "God Called in Sick," is one of the most powerful tunes I've heard in a while. Maybe I was wrong about these guys. RS

AFI "A Fire Inside" (Adeline) CD- Or, maybe I was right. Something is telling me that Jade had a really positive effect on the songwriting abilities of this band, 'cause on this release, still with former guitarist Mark, I find that AFI's sound is a bit stagnant. None of the 4 songs on this EP really shine in the way I have come to expect from AFI's work. With the exception of the interesting "The Hanging Garden," the songs here are all pretty standard hardcore tunes that don't come close to being as dynamic as their new disc on Nitro. I give this a 6. RS

Agoraphobic Nosebleed "PCP Torpedo" (Hydra Head) 7" It seems that in the metal-core world Hydra Head Records is a stamp of coolness, and I find myself falling victim to their reputation. For example after seeing an ad for Agoraphobic Nosebleed on HH I went out and bought their new CD on Relapse. So, after hearing both the new CD and this 7" I can tell you that while the prospect of a drum machine mixed with screaming and other random noises may seem cool, it is, in fact, not. I should have known, though, 'cause isn't one of these guys in Anal Cunt? RS

Alien Crime Syndicate (Collective Fruit) CD- Dep-O, how the great have fallen! I used to love love

love San Francisco's under-appreciated power pop outfit the Meices, and although nobody outside the rock critic community seemed to shed too many tears over their departure, I felt that the Bay Area had lost a great band that had never really received their due. So of course, when I received an EP from ex-Meice Joe Reineke's new band Alien Crime Syndicate, I was excited to give it a listen. As a matter of fact, I was so eager to hear ACS that their CD was the very first recording I took off the "to-be-reviewed" pile and popped into my stereo. And wow, what a big fucking letdown. There are plenty of superficial problems with the band: their recent relocation to L.A., the band name that feels like a direct rip-off of the recently-defunct Alien Mafia Distribution collective (of which I was a member), the fact that most of the songs here are only in the "demo version" stage. But more importantly, the music, which supposes itself to be "super-catchy space pop," is none of the above. Not catchy, not particularly odd or spacey, and certainly rather limp as pop records go. Where'd my crunchy power chords go? If an alien crime syndicate really does exist, it's not as lame as this. In the meantime, I'd remind ACS that as strange as L.A. may be at times, Mars is not. So stop frontin', yo! DF

Animal Chin "20 Minutes From Right Now" (Fueled by Ramen) CD- Okay, kids. Break out your pencils and start taking notes, because Uncle Dan has some advice for you. Forget what mom and dad have told you about doing drugs and taking candy from strangers, because that stuff is small change compared to this. If you should ever find yourself in Santa Cruz attending the afterparty for a wild ska show featuring the Siren Six and Animal Chin, don't eat a full pint of Ben & Jerry's Coffee Buzz Buzz Buzz ice cream all on your own. And, if you should accidentally ingest a carton of the abovementioned food item, whatever you do, do not choose a sleeping space on the floor that is directly adjacent to the space where one of the members of Animal Chin is noisily smooching with a girl, thus rendering you unable to fall asleep yet embarrassed to raise your voice in protest. This would undoubtedly be a horrible, horrible mistake. So don't do it. It is however, in your best interest to check out this final, posthumous Animal Chin CD, which consists of seven new songs and six songs from their old EP "The Ins' and Outs' of Terrorism." Animal Chin, like the Siren Six, inject a little bit of mod style into the ska-punk formula, resulting in a sound that is far more interesting and textured than most of the generic tenth-wave bands that have been giving the ska scene a bad name lately. I would even go so far as to say that this should even appeal to people who aren't normally into ska. But for god's sake, don't get caffeinated and sleep near these guys! DF

The Apples in Stereo "Her Wallpaper Reverie" (SpinArt) CD- Denver's Apples in Stereo, arguably the kings of the Elephant 6 psychedelic pop collective, have served up this EP, consisting of six full songs and augmented pastiche of odd sounds and noises, as an appetizer for their upcoming double album. On this release the Apples have polished their songwriting so much that it shines like a silver bauble, and while their previous releases (Notably the excellent "Tone Soul Evolution") hinted at a 60's pop mentality, "Her Wallpaper Reverie" takes things a few steps further. With song titles like "Strawberryfire" and "Ruby" and a wealth of off-kilter, instruments (notably a toy piano, which occupies a prominent role on the album), the Apples can't help but recall the Fab Four at their finest. But there's also a strange psychedelic flavor to the music that brings to mind the Olivia Tremor Control as much as it does the Beatles. The result

is an album that consists of glossy, harmonic pop on one level, and textured, complex soundscapes on another. At the record store where I work we played this three times in a row, and the manager liked so much that he bought it right on the spot. If the Apples' double album continues in the direction they're going with this EP, then it should be a release to watch for. DF

The Assemblers "Make" (Hep-Tone Fidelity) CD- It's hard to listen to the Assemblers without comparing them to early They Might Be Giants. After all, there are a number of similarities: both bands started as two-person projects, both hail from towns named after former presidents (TMBG from Lincoln, Massachusetts and the Assemblers from Jackson, Missouri), both have a love for unorthodox musical toys, both revel in quirky pop melodies, both are known to improvise during their live shows, and both have remarkably similar sounding vocals. However, the Assemblers, unlike TMBG, aren't quite as utterly weird, choosing instead to infuse their music with an almost jazzy sound. This feels like a very homegrown effort but I see a lot of promise in it; it's filled with interesting musical ideas but it still knows how to rock. DF

Atombombpocketknife (Southern) CD- Guitars whine and squeal throughout this CD, at times cleaving into jagged, dissonant riffs and at others dissolving into a wall of distortion and noise. If Unwound spent a summer hanging out with Rodan in Chapel Hill then did a lot of drugs and picked up their guitars it would sound like this. DF

Atom and His Package "Making Love" (No Idea) CD- This is the next installment of sequenced punk for all your rabid Atom fans. Here we have 17 b-sides, compilation tracks, and some other misc. songs for your listening pleasure. It is definitely apparent that this was not a standard full-length album as there is no real cohesion or flow of one song to another. Nevertheless, you get a lot of Atom's better known songs that were a bit harder to find in the past, such as "Avenger" (you know, that giant crane song), "Using the Metric System," "Hats off to Halford," and, my favorite, "What we do on Christmas." Other songs here are some rock tracks of Atom songs that are funny for a few listens, but not much else on subsequent listens. Overall, I think this is a pretty good buy if you love Atom—like I do—and want to complete your collection. However, there really are more shitty songs here than jems. RS

The August Spies (Espo) CD- Boston based anarcho-punks... or do they just like being loud and drunk? Regardless, they play with bands like Toxic Narcotic, Showcase Showdown but without the speed of the former nor the witty genius of the latter. Nonetheless, this is ok for what it is—fast, snotty predictable punk (which isn't necessarily a bad thing) that at best sounds like the Germs as squatter punks. I'd hate to act like I didn't once like stuff like this, but it's been done much better. With songs like "You Suck," "I Smoke," and "Jesus Hates Me", I'd rather not bitch about it. When August Spies patches start showing up next to AUs Rotten ones on the local crusties, then I'll admit defeat. DP

The Avengers "Died for your Sins" (Look-out!) CD- Dan told me this CD was really disappointing, but unlike the new Reggie and the Full Effect record I didn't go into my first listen of this record with any preconceived notions of what this would sound like. It's actually not bad, but I do not think it deserves all the hype it's getting. The

Avengers were a short lived, late '70s punk band along the lines of X-Ray Specs. Accompanying the 15 or so Avengers tunes on this disc are a bunch of Scavengers tunes which are re-recordings of Avengers tunes minus original bassist and drummer and replaced by Joel of MTX and Dan panic of Screeching Weasel. I have to say, the Scavengers tunes really bring the disc down, but then again I don't think Lookout could risk attempting to sell thousands of copies of bad recordings of Avengers songs which are over 20 years old on their own. So, the lo-fi, crude Avengers recordings are cool and make the disc sort of worth it, and the new Scavengers songs are not and do not. **RS**

Boy Sets Fire "In Chrysalis" (Initial) CDep- It may only be five songs long, and it may not be as instantly powerful as their earlier work, but Boy Sets Fire's "In Chrysalis" ep nonetheless shows the band evolving from the sound of their last album, "The Day the Sun Went Out." The first two songs are blazing pieces of the emo-hardcore variety, the third and fourth song are decent but forgettable, and the fifth song is a hardcore version of the Dead Kennedys' "Holiday in Cambodia." No, don't expect a Madball-style chugga-chugga rendition of the song; Boy Sets Fire actually stays pretty true to the original, keeping the song essentially the same but adding a little hardcore gruffness around the edges. I previously had thought that Boy Sets Fire was a bit overrated as a band, but this ep has definitely converted me.

Brother's Keeper "Forever Never Ending" (Trustkill) CD - Yeah, these guys are probably some of the nicest in the world. Yeah, some of the money from this album may go to help the needy (who knows, right?). Yeah, the actual music on here is pretty tight in a tough guy way. But c'mon, Mike Ski's voice is intolerable. I have no problem with unique voices, just as long as they are not screechy and high-pitched like this. If you're a fan, this CD collects the "Ladder" EP, the "Shadowcast" 7-inch, some comp tracks, and an unreleased cover of Bad Brains' "I Against I". If you're not a fan, be afraid. **JM**

Brother's Keeper "Sweet Revenge" (Surprise Attack) 7"- God, I want to like Brother's Keeper so much. I mean, this band packs some of the meanest, grooviest riffs into every hardcore song they play. The record is even on colored vinyl, dammit. But, Mike's vocals are so fucking terrible. Whenever he reaches those high notes (which is often, mind you) he sounds like Grover beating the shit out of Kermit. If only BK would get a new singer than they just might be a good band to check out. But, as it stands now, I think Muppets and hardcore do not mix. **RS**

Built to Spill "Keep it like a Secret" (Warner Brothers) CD- Everything after BTS's second album, "There's Nothing Wrong with Love" is going to be disappointing. Plain and simple. Whenever I bought one of the two releases since that album I listen to the new record eagerly hoping for those jangley-melodies, pop-harmonies, and ethereal atmospheres—not to mention those damn cello parts—Doug Martsch created on that album. It remains one of the 3 best indie records of the decade for me. So, of course when I get this album, BTS's second major label record, it's going to be disappointing. That's not to say that it isn't great. I mean, Martsch—this time with a steady line-up—is a guitar god for lazy summer afternoons, and he still manages to pump out a record chock full of inspiring tunes. But, to come back to my point,

what if The Beatles had made "Sgt. Pepper" when they first started? Everything else would just fall short. **RS**

Buried Alive "The Death of Your Perfect World" (Victory) CD - I was definitely sad when I heard that Despair had broken up; they have put out some great discs and they were insane live. Well, things are starting to look up - Scott Vogel's new band, Buried Alive, is just as vital as Despair ever was. This disc does bear some resemblance to Despair, if it's possible, but it sounds even more brutal. Great music, great production, and a great design; everyone who has counted Victory out needs to check out this disc to see that they still have some tricks left up their sleeve. Essential. **JM**

Calliope "(in)organics" (Thick) CD- Damn, this is a beautiful record. Defined by the label as "space rock/dream pop/slowcore," this record is a very ethereal trip through several genres. In the spirit of Tortoise, The Sea And Cake or various other Touch and Go acts, Calliope uses everything from thick string arrangements, horns, dubbed out production and samples to create a very deep and pulsating ride in itself, encompassing heady psychedelic guitarwork and at other times, turntables. This is one of those records that will constantly challenge you, since it started off on a very indie-rock/Americana tip and morphed into something else before I noticed. Soft vocals ring throughout and always seem to find a way to ebb into the mellow surrounding music. Emo fans will consider this "post-rock," hardcore fans will consider this "head music," fans of bands like The Red House Painters and Nick Drake will probably consider it "ambient" and fans of Spacemen 3 will probably think it's "folky". They're all correct simultaneously. It's especially interesting to see how the song structure on this record slowly unravels and dissipates as it progresses. By the end of the disc, I wasn't sure if it was still playing or not. Whatever they've conjured up here, it gets into your head and plays with it and is nonetheless very warm and soothing. This album is broad enough to snag the attention of fans of various different genres, and Calliope deserves considerable credit for rising above flimsy categories. Highly recommended, especially if you wouldn't normally dig something like this. **DP**

Camber "Anyway, I've Been There" (Deep Elm) CD- I've been avoiding doing this review for a while now. I guess it's cause their last record displayed the best example of a band doing Sunny Day style emo in a truly unique way. That disc had melody, chaos, beauty (c'mon it was called "Beautiful Character"), and finesse. This CD is a lot less rocking, a lot less risk taking, and a lot wimplier. I imagine that a bunch of major labels may take notice with this CD, but I'm disappointed. Even though this CD was produced by John Agnello (which Deep Elm spares no opportunity to tell me), I think that Camber may have lost their edge that separated them from a great Sunny Day Real Estate-esque band doing something original, to well, a mediocre copycat act. **RS**

Carter Peace Mission "Disco Stu Likes Disco Music" (Mutant Pop) CD- "It all began with a kiss, now it hurts when I piss..." I vote no. This disc gets points for having good Simpsons samples, but then loses them by sounding like Screeching Weasel and every other punk band out there. I don't even know if this would have excited me before I heard the fast pop punk style played out so much. Spend your money on Pez or anything else. **JM**

Casket Lottery "Dot Dot Dash Something or Other Dot" (Status) CDep- Would it be too far off to suggest that this band got their name from the bidding war surrounding Coalesce shortly before the Kansas City hardcore band decided to break up? Well, I don't know for sure that there was a bidding war, but I do know that Coalesce is breaking up and that this band features past and present members of said musical outfit. So, if you're coming into the Casket Lottery's first release expecting hardcore then go back to Boston, 'cause The Casket Lottery play what is commonly referred to as emo. I really see this band fitting in more with the artier side of the Louisville scene or the more melodic side of the DC scene since they remind me of June of 44 at times with the looped bass lines that go on forever. But, there seems to be something more to the CL's sound that make comparisons difficult. They clearly have been playing with bands like the Getup Kids a lot, but they also have much quirkier melodies to their music like No Knife or Boilermaker. Wait... yes!... that's it: this band sounds like the mid-western answer to Boilermaker (which I guess wouldn't put them very far away from Boy's Life if you compare sounds). The good news is that I like Boilermaker, and, although I think the CL full length on Second Nature is a bit easier on the ears, I like this. **RS**

The Casket Lottery "Choose Bronze" (Second Nature) CD- I've been listening to this on and off for quite some time now and at first I really didn't like it. I thought it sounded like a less catchy Getup Kids with definite Chicago influences. I still think this but there is a certain charm that this band produces that has kept me listening to this album for the past couple of months, albeit on and off and sometimes begrudgingly to force myself to write the damn review already. It hasn't grown on me all that much and I don't know if I would pull this out once this review is finished but it is definitely pretty good and I'm sure fans of emo that don't know how overplayed this style of music is becoming will appreciate this record a lot. On a side note, this CD has a quite different vibe from the ep on Status. For one, this disc is much less experimental and seems to stick to a formula. Plus, the artwork for this disc, while minimalist on the cover, is fantastic. To sum up, if you're into the Getup Kids and Sunny Day Real Estate then you will dig this lots 'cause it is probably the best amalgamation of those two bands I've ever heard. However, that does not necessarily mean this is a great CD. **RS**

Cataract (Infinite) CDep - This sounds like every other metal-hardcore album out there. And what's worse, these guys had to come all the way from Switzerland to play like everyone else. Heavy-ass metalcore that occasionally reminds me of early Morning Again and Tom Apart performed by guys in Bulls shirts and sung by some guy named Mosh (that's a ridiculous name, have some self-respect). Why cross the ocean for this? It's been over done here. **JM**

Cave-in "Creative Eclipses" (Hydra Head) CDep- I have been raving about Cave-in to anyone who would listen ever since I first popped their last full length, "Until Your Heart Stops," into my disc-man. Maybe I should stop doing that 'cause I really do not like the direction this ep takes a once phenomenal metal-core band. I mean, I have no problem with bands evolving and exploring different—even if it is less aggressive—modes of expression in their music. However, the second and fifth songs on this disc are basically weird 5 minute dronings that are quite reminiscent of that early Seattle noise-core band, Earth. The other three songs here are either prog. rock-- and I never liked Rush or King's X if that gives you any indication of my opinion-- on the more aggressive tip or accoustic

songs. Yes folks, I kid you not: track 4, "Burning Down the Billboards," sounds very very much like Simon and Garfunkle. As a matter of fact, the other day I called my friend Rama in Boston and asked him what music I heard coming through the phone line. He asked me to guess, and I guessed S&G and he told me it was Cave-in and that he loves it. But, I then I remembered that Rama has terrible taste in music. **RS**

Chelsea Multiplier (Tri+Force) CD- Wow, this label sure releases a wide variety of stuff. Noise core sludge to this emo type stuff. I actually like this a lot. Sort of lazy indie rock with a very crude feel. This band does some cool stuff like insane tempo/dynamic changes where they go really slow and soft one second to totally loud and fast a second later. The vocals remind me a little of The Van Pelt but they're definitely more sing-songy, while the music reminds me of Haywood. Wow is this crude—to the extent that the singers' voices are out of tune and the distortion channel sounds like shit—but it is cool because of it. I bet these guys get a lot of chicks (and for the girl in the band vice-versa). **RS**

Citizen Fish "Active Ingredients" (Lookout!) CD- What British band is welding politics to music the most successfully these days? Crass and the Clash and Gang of Four are long broken up, and I certainly hope you didn't say Chumbawamba. Enter Citizen Fish, a British punk-ska group with punk cred (being a former member of the Subhumans is the equivalent of a "punk for life" card in your wallet), devoted fans across the world, a unique sound that is two parts punk and one part reggae, and a very forward-thinking perspective towards political and cultural issues that helps the music rise above mere entertainment and become a vehicle for a number of very pointed and articulate political messages concerning vegetarianism and globalism and so on. The music isn't particularly radio-friendly, at least not in the same way as, say, Save Ferris. Although Citizen Fish's sound is quite distinct from that of the Subhumans, you can still hear their influence, and it helps to dull the overly giddy effect that most ska has. Musically, this isn't for everyone, but politically, it should be, so listen up, punks. **DF**

Citizen Fish "Habit" (Lookout) 7"- In case you didn't know, Citizen Fish is the Subhumans with 1 different member. So, they sound like the Subhumans with a healthy dose of reggae and ska. This remastered version of Habit no longer sounds like it was "recorded under a mattress at the bottom of a fish tank full of congealed yogurt." It's classic Citizen Fish. The first side if more reggae tinged, the 2nd more punk. Political, infused with energy, and one of the only bands to successfully pull off the ska-punk mix. A good 7" overall, but I really wonder how much of a demand there is for remastered Citizen Fish records. **PR**

Computer Cougar (Gern Blandsten/Spit of ORR) 7"- This doesn't sound anything like Roarschach. Heh heh. Most of you probably don't know this as Computer Cougar hasn't really hit the national scene, but Charles Maggio, formerly of Roarschach, is in this band. Instead, CC sound more like new wave ala Gang of Four. It's pretty cool if you like that sort of thing, and my sister just happens to love her Maoist new wave

so I get a healthy dose of Gang of Four regularly. That is why I think this seven inch is pretty cool in that late '70s rock sort of way. Also, the cover art for this record is so cool. RS

Connie Dungs "Earthbound for the Holiday" (Mutant Pop) CD- I really hope that this band isn't proud of their name. Because it's a terrible, terrible name. Likewise for the cover art. Musically, I'm a little put off by the singer's voice, which is hoarse and faux-British in a way that feels mismatched with the instruments. Also, the drums are mixed poorly; the snare drum reverberates hollowly instead of having a nice crisp snap like it should for a pop-punk record such as this. I'll definitely pass on this one. DF

Counterclockwise "The Fine Line Between Parasite And Mastermind" (Counterclockwise) CD- Hmm, emo-derived art hardcore from upstate NY? Nice guitar work and even nicer packaging (cardstock folding envelope). This reminds me of some earlier Dischord stuff, along the lines of Embrace and Souldside and also seems influenced by some noisy elements. It's often fast, and there's this nice throaty vocal that ranges from a yeaming howl (ala Ian at his finest) to a back-of-the-throat scream. Alternately chunky and speedy, the songs are slightly angular and still move along nicely. This is what I call progressive, technical and yet still rapid and hungry. Some of the production seems a bit lower than what these guys deserve, but it does create some good tones that most guitarists don't use. There is apparently a saxophone player somewhere in the mix, and it's unfortunate that he can only be detected once. Anthemic enough to remember and enjoy but still forward-leaning. Don't be surprised if these guys start blowing up because this is really worth your time. Fuckin' upstate! Well done. DP

Countervail "The Most Abused Word" (New Age) CD- It's good to see New Age putting out records once again. After some troubles, I think in the financial realm, they're back with a much anticipated record from SoCal rockers Countervail. I was supposed to see these guys open up for Good Clean Fun a few weeks ago, but for some reason they cancelled. I bet they would put on a good show, although their record is not all I had hoped. Countervail sound like a less interesting, more hardcore version of Grade. They've got some cool riffage going on with vocals that remind me of Jake from Converge or Steve of Cave-in. It's too bad I didn't get to see them live 'cause this recording sounds rather uninspired and a little bit limp. I guess I like my hardcore a bit faster or I like the guitars a little bit louder in the mix, 'cause this doesn't do much for me. RS

Danielle Howle "Catalog" (Kill Rock Stars) CD- I was really excited to get this in the mail, 'cause finally I get a break from all the bad hardcore coming out today. I guess, KRS is trying to continue capitalize on the success they had with lo-fi, acoustic acts like Elliott Smith 'cause this CD is just Danielle and a guitar on the whole disc. When I popped in the disc I was immediately struck by the amazing song "Tops of Trees" which is one of the most stoicly powerful songs I've ever heard (even though it's only about climbing trees). Unfortunately the disc starts to get a bit prosaic and drag about midway through. Maybe it's that I've been listening to so much hardcore lately that I just need those chugga chugga guitars to be happy (although I sincerely doubt that is the case), but I forgot this was on after a while. Don't get me wrong, Danielle has this amazing guitar style no unlike Joanie Mitchell and a voice a lot like Edie Brickell. I will keep

this, which is more than I can say for most of the records I reviewed this issue, because I'm sure this would be good hold-a-girl-in-my-arms-and-stare-in-each-other's-eyes-for-hours music. RS

Darlington "Bowling Betty" (Mutant Pop) 7"- I sometimes wonder where Mutant Pop finds these bands. It's like every band out there that sounds vaguely like the Ramones (and there are a lot of them as MP's 7" series can attest to) puts out something on Mutant Pop. So, here we have Darlington which sound more like old Green Day than the Ramones, and they're not bad. They sing songs about meeting girls in bowling alleys and getting rejected and stuff like that. They're catchy and fun, but I really see nothing that sets these guys apart from any other band I've reviewed on a Mutant Pop seven inch. RS

David Hillyard and the Rocksteady Seven "Playtime" (Hellcat) CD- Saxophonist David Hillyard has certainly paid his dues—and then some—to the world of ska, performing and recording with well-respected traditional ska groups such as the Slackers, Hepcat, and the Stubborn All-Stars. On "Playtime," Hillyard has gathered together an all-star cast of musicians to create an album that is, in his word, "the end result of my fourteen year love affair with the Jamaican music known as the Ska, the Rocksteady, and the Reggae." There's an old-fashioned flavor to this album, which chooses to eschew any traces of the punk-ska aesthetic which for the most part has only polluted ska music. Instead, the ska is infused with heavy doses of jazz and slowed-down rocksteady. It's very musically competent, but somehow this lacks the "oomph" that I've found with other groups like Hepcat and the Slackers. It's good but it just doesn't get me going. Fans of old-school ska should definitely pick this up, but it just isn't my cup of tea. DF

Death by Stereo "If Looks Could Kill I'd Watch You Die" (Indecision) CD- If I'm correct, this is the third band on Indecision that Keith Barney plays in. But, this band sounds nothing like Throwdown or Adamantium, and unfortunately I like them better than DBS. Lyrically, this band plays politically aware hardcore with a vocal style reminiscent of Mike Patton's later Faith No More stuff or Tommy from Silent Majority if you can see that one. They play technically proficient HC full of mosh choruses and melodic breakdowns. Although they seem to be doing something original—in that an easy overall comparison is not at my fingertips, contrary to most hardcore bands these days—I think this band could use a bit more musical maturity and synchronization before they hit the national stage. Good, not great. RS

Death Cab For Cutie "Something About Airplanes" (Eisnor/Barsuk) CD- Wow. Do I actually need to say anything more than "Wow"? If you want more, this is an incredibly varied indie rock album that hasn't left my CD player today. There are some nods to Built to Spill or newer Sunny Day Real Estate on here, though not as loud or noisy. And as a bonus, there's strings on a few songs (I'm a sucker for that kind of stuff) and the layout is great. Pop music just isn't made like this enough. Highly recommended. JM

Decay "Destiny" (Suburban Home) CD- Wait, these guys are from Japan? You could have fooled me, as this sounds like it's straight out of the East Coast. Decay could easily play along side NYC bands like older Sick Of It All and Warzone. There's even the traditional crew picture inside, though instead of tough white guys, there's a bunch of tough Asian guys (not much of a change). Enough clown-

ing, this is sounds like a lot of good bands out there, so they get points for bringing the sound to Japan but then lose points for not deviating from the formula at all. For challenging Japanese hardcore, check out the Boredoms or Melt Banana. JM

Diesel Boy "Sofa King Cool" (Honest Don's) CD- This is definitely a departure for the reigning kings of slacker-punk-rock from NoCal when considering their previous record. "Venus Envy" seemed a lot slicker, more polished than this, and the songs were a bit more complex and varied on the last record. "Sofa King Cool" is straight-ahead punk rock that Diesel Boy does so well, but without the solos, whammy bars, or samples of girls making whoopee used on previous releases. Overall, I like the change Diesel Boy has made—although I must admit I like "Venus Envy" more. They still manage to keep the same vibe of California teenagers, on their way to the beach, six-packs and surf-boards in hands, cruising around till all hours of the night, just in time to turn the tape over to the other side. The basic framework of Diesel Boy's style is still there, with Diesel Dave still wailing his amazing tenor voice about the usual pop-punk topics like snorting coke off Gwen Stefani's ass or girls who vacuum in high heels and lingerie. However, it seems like this record was a bit more thrown together than past efforts. Not bad, but not bad for Diesel Boy just seems to get lost in the shuffle. RS

The Dining Room Set (Growth) CD- Here's something that doesn't arrive in the LOI mailboxes every day. The Dining Room Set play kicky, gleefully fun pop that owes a whole lot more to the R&B sound of the '60s and the '70s than it does to any contemporary musical movement. Fuzzy vibraphones, wah-wah guitars, even a cheesy primary-color cover that suits the music perfectly... these guys are better than the Jackson 5! This is the type of stuff you'd expect that the people from "The Electric Company" would listen to. It's great! DF

Dirt Bike Annie "Hit the Rock!" (Mutant Pop) CD- No relation, I think, to the similarly-named band Tugboat Annie. This is a pretty standard Mutant Pop release, so if you are at all familiar with Mutant Pop, then you should have an idea of what you're getting into here. Dirt Bike Annie has longer songs than the Automatics, their singer's voice has a lower pitch than the Kung Fu Monkeys, and they're a hell of a lot poppier than Jon Cougar Concentration Camp. Still, though, this is Mutant Pop through and through. Short, fun pop-punk with backing vocals, a touch of moog, and production that, while it isn't bad, could use a little bit of sharpening. DF

The Distillers (Hellcat) 7"- Yet another poorly designed seven inch from Hellcat. Anyway, the Distillers are a drunk-punk band that sound like the bastard son of Hole (i.e. Courtney Love) and... er... Hickey? yeah Hickey will do. It's really not bad stuff, actually it's pretty good even though the singer does sound exactly like a punked out Courtney Love (and, as all my good friends know, I am simply too cool for Courtney). You know, power chords, standard fast drum beats and bass solos. The usual, except in this case the Distillers do it pretty well. RS

Dogpiss "Eine Kleine Punkmusik" (Honest Don's) CD- With the guitar chops that this band has, I'm guessing that they have to be using those double guitars made so popular by Cheap Trick hooked up to about a billion pedals and being fed

into speakers fifteen feet high. It just doesn't get thicker and chunkier than this. Fat Wreck Chords' wet dream, I'm telling you! But Dogpiss, which features members of the British punk groups Snuff and Guns 'n Wankers, manages to turn the volume down just often enough to let some clever harmonies seep through the cracks. The chords may be poppy and melodic, but even so they're still just a little bit too heavy and overbearing for me. DF

The Donnas "Get Skintight" (Lookout!) CD- Given the Lewinsky-esque mountain of media attention that has been heaped upon these four nubile young rock 'n' roll girls from Palo Alto, it's easy to forget that just a few years ago, before they were discovered by Lookout! Records, the Donnas were just four high schoolers in yet another Ramones-influenced three chord band. Now, just a few years later, they've toured the world, had roles in the movie *Jawbreaker*, graced more magazine covers than I can count, and stirred up unwholesome feelings in many a dirty old man's mind. They've received so much critical praise, at least in the Bay Area, that to speak ill of them virtually ensures lifetime banishment from the elite ranks of rock journalism. So take away my hipster identification card if you will, but someone needs to end this madness, and if it has to be me then so be it. The Donnas, beneath all the glam-rock attitude and hype, really aren't that good. Don't get me wrong—they know how to play their instruments just as well as they know how to play on the kitsch mentality of their fans by doing silly things like covering a Motley Crue song. When the Donnas were ripping off Ramones riffs note-for-note on their eponymous (and best) first album, it felt like their only motive was to have fun performing their own take on the pop-punk they had grown up listening to. But this new album is so concerned with image over music that it seems to repudiate everything that punk rock stood for in the first place. Yeah, there's some pretty decent guitar riffage here, and there's nothing wrong with the whole sex-drugs-rock 'n' roll thing, but after three albums, it's gotten pretty tired. The Donnas are pretty good, but they're not that good. And if the balloon doesn't get popped soon, it's just going to keep blowing up and blowing up. DF

Dropkick Murphys "The Gang's All Here" (Hellcat) CD- I first encountered The Dropkick Murphys as a young 21 year old lad while drinking pints of Peps in a New York City bar with some friends. It was an Irish pub, actually, and the jukebox of this particular bar contained the DKM's first CD. It was pretty cool Ol' street-punk. I think I would have missed the message of comradeship and Irish nationalism had I not been in an Irish bar at the time. After the huge success of that record, I got the Boston foursome's newest full length with their new singer Al Barr. Sitting here in my room—two thousand miles from that Irish pub—the effect is a bit different. This sounds like straight-ahead punk, maybe Rancid meets the Swingin' Utters. It's pretty good stuff and fairly catchy at that, but I'm guessing the magic of the DKM's sound comes from one of two places: in their lives shows or from Irish pub jukeboxes. RS

The Dwarves "The Dwarves are Young and Good Looking" (Epitaph) CD- Most bands that do things like fake their guitarist's death and play live in the nude usually wear out their welcome quick. The same would also be true for the Dwarves if they were not good at playing music. Fortunately, they are good at what they do, so we all laugh along instead of throwing rotten vegetables. The Dwarves are playing fun garage punk these days; some songs even have a touch of surf rock in

them. This disc would be great in the car for running red lights and cutting off other motorists (whatever that means). Not bad; I'm glad Epitaph sent this rather than a NOFX or Bad Religion clone. **JM**

Egon "Disillusioned Leftist" (Egon) CD- For some reason, my mind immediately jumped to "Dear You" era Jawbreaker while listening to this CD, which is quite the compliment in my book. Indie rock that goes from quiet and jangly to loud and noisy at the drop of a hat, with the music always engrossing the listener. I have trouble understanding what the lyrics are about, but my parents could never understand what any of my CDs' singers were saying anyway, so it's no big whoop. The vocalist has the pleading emo voice down, so who am I to complain? Not a whole lot different from everything else out there, but still a great listen. **JM**

Emperor "Equilibrium" (Century Media) CD- Just what I need. I'm home alone in a big house with the wind blowing so loud the windows are shaking. I just saw the Blair Witch Project last night, and although I didn't think it was nearly as scary as everyone else seemed to, Emperor is not what I need to get me in a hopeful mood. On the plus side, Emperor fucking rocks. Double bass-pedal action up the wazoo, synth-guitars blazing Bach riffs at a million miles a second, and some of the creepiest gothic harmonies this side Camina Baranna. Take Metallica, throw in some Slayer, add some creepy harmonies and melodic breakdowns and you get Emperor. Now, I'm going to go hide in my closet and hope their old drummer doesn't get me. **RS**

E-town Concrete "F\$ck the World" (Resurrection AD) CDep- First off, I always thought it was cool when the Swingin' Utters replaced all the S's in their name with dollar signs, but let me tell you something E-town Concrete: a dollar sign cannot replace a U. Sorry, it just can't be done. No sirree-bob. But now onto Blood for Blood... I mean E-town Concrete's music. I knew I was going to be less than impressed when I heard the dedication of the first song: "This goes out to all you shady bitches, thinkin' we owe you something. We don't owe you shit bitch, that's how it is" or something to that effect. Tough-guy hardcore at its worst (or best depending on how you look at it). I don't know if these guys are straightedge, so I don't think they're tough guy in that way. But, rest

assured the hip-hop breakdowns-- ah New Jersey-- following the gruff screamy vocals do little for me. This is the second worst band in hardcore, right behind Skarhead. The reason they're not the worst is because of my favorite breakdown chorus on the disc: "This goes out to my peeps up in the crowd, this goes out to my niggas gettin' wild, this goes out to the kids that is representin, this goes out to the tough guys teachin' lessons." This is fucking terrible. Yo. **RS**

Face to Face "Ignorance is Bliss" (Beyond/Lady Luck) CD- Of course this sucks, do you even need to ask? But, it sucks in a different way than previous Face to Face stuff (and the major label distribution is not what I'm talking about). This is very produced and... dare I say... really not punk. Face to Face has traded fast-palm-muted-power-chord-skate-rock that was (regretably so) undeniably catchy, for lots of chorus pedals combined with ultra-slick production an attempt at radio friendliness and a touch of the ever trendy emo sound. Wow, what nerve. I mean, it is common knowledge that this band ditched "swash-buckling pirate rock" (cough... Queensryche... cough) to play punk rock. But now, it seems as if they are trying to do a Radiohead meets Jimmy Eat World thing with all the effects and obtuse recording techniques. I must give them credit because this is a very ambitious album that, played by another band with a better track record, may even impress. Nevertheless, this is Face to Face who have sucked for years. I think it is a bit too late to redeem themselves (and the cover of Chesterfield King by Jawbreaker they played when I saw them a few weeks ago only hurt this record's chance for positivity). **RS**

The Fairlanes "Bite Your Tongue" (Suburban Home) CD- The majority of the liner notes for this CD are dedicated to profiling the four members of this Blink 182-esque band, so instead of reviewing the music (if you like NOFX, then you'll like this. If not, then not), I'm going to probe deeply into the inner psyche of the band members. Drummer Scott is far and away my favorite member of the band, because A) he's the drummer, and B) he apparently lives in a delusional fantasy world in which he likes to pretend that he is a member of Iron Maiden. Having often enacted this fantasy in the privacy of my own room, I can empathize wholeheartedly with Scott. Singer/guitarist Jason's profile, however, reveals an unforgivable character flaw that lowers him in my estimation. Jason makes it very clear that he prefers Dr. Pepper to Mr. Pibb, but as any true soda connoisseur

should know, both sodas taste like prune juice and are essentially undrinkable. That Jason should concern himself with piddling trifles such as this, while avoiding far more serious issues such as the timeless Coke vs. Pepsi debate, speaks volumes about his inability to focus on what really matters in life. Bassist Jeff likes Ayn Rand. Yuck. Guitarist Robbie says that his least favorite word is "itthinkssomethingiswrongwiththevan." Clearly, he is the smartest member of the band, because his thorough knowledge of obscure and arcane vocabulary reflects an educated upbringing and erudite world view. Hell, I couldn't even find that word in Webster's! This guy is brilliant! **DF**

Falling Sickness/Dysentery (Sub City) CD- When will the boys at Hopeless/Sub City give up already. I mean, they put out awesome stuff like Scared of Chaka, Digger, and the Dillinger 4, right next to absolutely terrible stuff like Mustard Plug, the new 15, and then this. Here you get 4 songs from FS and 6 songs from Dysentery that are loud, fast, and terribly obnoxious. The vocals are awful (even though many of the FS ones are in Spanish, which I suppose earns them so points), the guitars are boring, the drums play the same beat every single time, and the bass is lightning fast. I saw FS a few months ago unfortunately and I really wanted to yell, "hey, Falling Sickness, why don't you play the other song." And that was after 10 songs had already gone by. Same goes for Dysentery. **RS**

Farside "The Monroe Doctrine" (Revelation) CD- One of the few bands who can flirt dangerously close to the "alt-rock" sound without sounding in the least bit trite or derivative, Farside have, after two years of relative inactivity, come out with an excellent album that is more diverse and better-produced than anything they've come up with yet. Unlike many Revelation bands, Farside aren't afraid to actually sing, and while they are undoubtedly heavily influenced by punk and hardcore, they're not afraid to inject some melody into their songs as well. An acoustic guitar -- gasp! -- even shows up here and there. To me, it's a sign of talent that Farside can and does turn up the volume, with great success, but can also step out from behind their wall of sound and let their softer side shine through. Jesus, I sound like a Sears commercial. This is good. **DF**

Fastbreak "Whenever You're Ready" (Revelation) CD- Okay, I may be the only one in the world who doesn't like Fastbreak, but I am holding fast to that premise. I really don't think they pull off that old-

school-meets-new-school sound without sounding derivative and a bit stale. Example: you know how Saves the Day sounds like Lifetime but it's okay 'cause Saves the Day play really catchy pop-core? Well, Fastbreak seem to be trying to sound like Saves the Day (yeah, I know Fastbreak came first... shut up) which is a rip-off of a rip-off. I really think that Patrick's vocals are terrible and don't fit the music. And to make matter worse, I have no patience for lines/song-names like "Music is my girlfriend." Maybe they'd be (a lot) better if the vocals fit the music, instead the vocals aren't quite hardcore and aren't quite pop. **RS**

Fifteen "Lucky" (Sub City) CD- Remember that kid from grade school who had absolutely no idea how to have fun? The kid who never told jokes and always stayed inside during recess to finish up his math problems? The kid whose problem wasn't that he was unpopular but rather that he was an absolute stick in the mud? Usually those types of kids grow up to be accountants or mathematicians or so on, and as they go through the motions of their lives they don't really bother anybody, but nor do they ever learn what it's like to actually dislodge the stick from their collective ass long enough to realize that, hey, life can be fun! This time around, one of those kids didn't become an accountant. He started a punk rock band. Jeff Ott, who first played in the seminal East Bay pop-punk group Crimpshrine and now acts as frontman and mouthpiece for Fifteen, is without a doubt a remarkably intelligent and socially aware man. His almost martyr-like dedication to his leftist political and ideological values have established him as the prototypical political punk in the vacuum left by Jello Biafra's partial retreat from the public eye. But Jeff has already hurt his credibility in many people's minds by resorting to vindictive guerrilla tactics to damage and discredit people in the punk scene who he identifies with the fascist establishment, and he seems unable to realize that, whether he likes it or not, most of the people in the world -- even in the punk scene -- aren't going to be ultra-political 24 hours a day like he is. The result is that, on Fifteen's much-heralded new album on the philanthropic label Sub City, Jeff's political views are so all-pervasive that he simply comes off as being whiny. I'm all for a hefty serving of politics in my music, but do

Ross' Top Ten (RS)

- 1) At the Drive-in
- 2) The Dillinger 4 (live)
- 3) The '65 Film Show
- 4) Indecision: "To Live and Die in New York"
- 5) Hot Water Music (live)
- 6) Edaline
- 7) Good Clean Fun: "Shopping for a Crew" CD
- 8) AFI: "Black Sails in the Sunset"
- 9) Tears for Fears
- 10) Giant Robot Magazine

Dan's Top Ten (DF)

- 1) the Olivia Tremor Control
- 2) Piebald
- 3) The White Stripes
- 4) Dr. Doom
- 5) Momus
- 6) Marine Research
- 7) Time in Malta
- 8) the Stereo
- 9) At the Drive-in
- 10) Neutral Milk Hotel

Jason Murphy's Top Ten (JM) Pablo RockAfucker's Top Ten (PR)

- 1) being sXe/vegan 3 years and counting...
- 2) Lifetime: "Jersey's Best Dancers"
- 3) finally seeing Avail live
- 4) Guided By Voices: "Do The Collapse"
- 5) The Red Violin (incredible film)
- 6) Boy Sets Fire: "In Chrysalis"
- 7) 6-hour long Simpsons tapes
- 8) Of Montreal: "Cherry Peel"
- 9) Grad School in the fall
- 10) Cornelius: "Fantasma"

- 1) Nirvana rare tracks
- 2) The Danomatics "Dan's B-day" EP
- 3) Mix tape with crimpshrine, hickey and 50 Million
- 4) American Steel's new 7"
- 5) Promise Ring: "Nothing Feels Good"
- 6) Dory Tourettes and The Skirtheads
- 7) Sacrificious: "The Album"
- 8) 50 Million: "Bust the Action"
- 9) Hickey's 1st Album
- 10) Bjork/Alec Empire remix 12" of "Joga"

we really need to hear instructions on how to clean a dirty needle set to music? The guitar chops here are decent, but too often the musical quality of the album is sacrificed to make room for Jeff's all-encompassing political agenda. I'm glad he has a conscience, but I'm a bit disappointed that he's forgotten how to rock. **DF**

The Five Deadly Venoms "Shapeshift" (Thick) CD-A nice blend of that "post-punk" sound of heavy, bassy repetitive guitar rhythms and the brooding, more muscled emo melodicism. This, for some reason, sounds like what Sweetbelly Freakdown were trying to do on their album but didn't pull off. Vocals are reminiscent of Rites Of Spring/early Fugazi Guy Picciotto. Punchy enough to be catchy, and the vocals thankfully bind the whole mix together without making their formula annoying. Good stuff. **DP**

Fluke Starbucker "Hooker at Sea" (Malvado) CD-I'm getting a very Braid-y, Chicago post-rock vibe from this (unfortunately titled) band. There's very competent musicianship on this album, and the vocals, for some reason, remind me of Buttsteak (remember them?) mixed with Kind of Like Spitting. I know, that's some pretty arcane references. But hey, you don't like it, go do your own review. I don't know if this will be in constant rotation on my stereo, but there's some very interesting musical ideas on the album, which contains a number of faster rocking songs and slower, prettier stuff as well. Not bad. **DF**

F-Minus "Failed Society" (Hellcat) 7"- This 7" has 11 songs on it, but it might as well have 2 due to the fact that they all sound the same. This is noisy street punk with a slightly socio-political feel. I could definitely rock out to this if I were drunk and hyper. I'm not sure if that constitutes much of an endorsement... probably not, but you get the idea. F-get minus points for the photocopied sleeve artwork. God, you'd think with Hellcat's (i.e. Epitaph's) budget they could afford some decent art production. **PR**

Four Hundred Years "Suture and Other Songs" (Lovitt) CD-It seems that in the post-Minor Threat history of Washington DC hardcore bands the guitar is often used as a way to provide treble, add more chaos, and basically round out the edges, while the rhythm section (i.e. bass and drums) are used for the real meat of the songs. Think about it: you can't tell me Ian and Guy's guitar work in Fugazi is more important than the hard driving, steady as a motherfuckin' rock rhythm section provided by Joe and Brendan. Maybe bands like Jawbox or Bluejazz contradict that notion, but I never really considered them to be hardcore. This theory I have is in obvious contrast to, say, the midwest where emo bands with the mid-range knob on the guitar amp turned way up rule the school. So here we have some early recordings from 400 Years, including their first album and some 7" tracks. More than any other band I've seen in a while my theory of DC hardcore bands holds true with 400 Years. On the first song on the disc, the aptly titled "Intro," the listener is bombarded by a smooth current of bass and drums in sync. I know that Fugazi started with the intention of bringing hardcore together with more obtuse styles of music like dub and reggae, so this just proves my point, and so does 400 Years when you hear the simple drum beats mixed with the stop-start bass lines that is the real highlight for me. Okay, to get right down to it, I really like 400 Year's last album on Lovitt, but there doesn't seem like much of a progression from here to there. Plus, the recording quality is better on the latest record. So to sum up, this is really good... the latest album is

better. **RS**

Franklin (Tree) CD-Everyone's favorite rock-turned-dub-all-stars that are the focus of every other Atom and his Package song are back, this time on a new label with a bigger budget than ever before. I have always had my struggles with Franklin's music. I mean, I love the frantic rock they played on "Go Kid Go" (which was re-issued a few years ago by Workshop), but I wasn't entirely comfortable with the huge change of sound they made on "Building in A and E." Don't get me wrong, I still liked it, after all I interviewed them for the first fucking issue of this zine (which I pray none of you ever see). It's just that I thought that Franklin's version of dub/reggae was kind of boring, didn't go anywhere, and was nothing more than above average background music. Now I get this new self-titled full length on Tree and I am struck that although Franklin made a huge musical progression during their first two records, this record really does nothing that "Building in A and E" didn't do. It is that mid-tempo, bass heavy dub/reggae that is so prosaic that you forget the music is on. Sorry guys, I generally really like your stuff, and you seem like nice people (if I hear one more girl at Ithaca College tell me how hot Brian is I'm going to fucking kill myself), but this record bores the hell out of me. **RS**

Frenzal Rhomb "A Man's Not A Camel" (Fat) CD-Well, you're probably thinking what I was thinking-another copycat pop-punk album from a pop-punk label. Sometimes I truly wonder what could make a pop-punk band stand out from the THOUSANDS of 'em that already have perfected the formula. Well, I'm wrong here. But this ain't no whole "you-better-change-your-mind-'cause-this-is-amazing" diatribe, this is without any doubt a pop-punk record. It's speedy, catchy and perfectly in line with what Fat puts out. However, these Australian lads are notable for their solid songwriting, complete with hints of rock and vocally-harmonic pop. They use some different tempos, and some approaches that are pleasantly outside of the NOFX songbook. It took me several listens to really decide, that in itself should say something. A worthy listen if you can still listen to pop punk. **DP**

FYP "Incomplete Crap Vol. 2" (Recess) CD-Longtime fans of FYP will love this (especially if you don't have all the 7"s and comps these songs appeared on.) 43 songs in 71 minutes. Snotty, immature punk rock loviness. Todd Congiliere always sounded like a whiny kid yelling at you over the phone with a bad connection-in other words I love his voice, but I recognize that many probably do not. Even though the recording is sub-par the music has a primitive pop-sensibility (something I wish would be written about me). I love FYP and some of these songs are classic in their crappiness. If you've never heard them, this is good, but I would start with their 1996 album "Toilet Kids Breathe." **PR**

The Gamits "This is My Boomstick" (To The Left) CD-Dep-Huzzah, a pop-punk record that's actually good! Lately, most new albums in this genre-which, don't get me wrong, I hold dearly to my heart-have been stagnant at best and unlistenable at worst, plowing through the same three or four tired chords and adding little that was new or innovative. Denver's Gamits aren't musical trailblazers themselves, and nor is this a perfect album, but at least their songs sound like more than stale rereads, and I challenge anybody to find a more hummable tune than "Run Along," which makes gang choruses fun again. I wouldn't be surprised if Lookout! were to add these guys to their roster sometime soon. **DF**

Garrison (Espo) 7" This is just run-of-the-mill emo. They try to rock, but don't. I must admit, as I listened to this record more and more it did grow on me, but it still didn't come through the way I would have hoped. The B-side could almost be Veruca Salt if there were girl singers, fuzzier guitars, and more bass (come to think of it, Veruca Salt would be a bad comparison.). More on the lo-fi side of things with plenty of distortion and passionate vocals. Overall this was fair like very other emo copycat act out there. **PR**

Garrison "The Bend Before the Break" (Revelation) CD-I think it's about time for Rev to stop looking for the next big thing in emo and start concentrating on who's who in hardcore 'cause this CD makes me suspect that emo is on its last legs (at least in the mid-Promise Ring phase). Garrison, who hails from the Boston, can best be described as taking the sappiest moments of Texas is the Reason and mixing it with everything I hate about Mineral. Their press propaganda claims they throw hardcore in there too, but I don't see it. Maybe I'm not looking hard enough. But then again when searching for something deep down in life's little nooks and crannies we all have to ask ourselves... is it even worth it? **RS**

Good Clean Fun "Shopping for a Crew" (Phyte) CD-I can't say enough good things about Good Clean Fun, and if you haven't heard the buzz surrounding this band by now then you've been living under a rock. While tearing up the east coast they've earned a reputation as the most positive hardcore band in the country right now. I saw an ad for a seven-inch by these guys which labelled them as "just what hardcore needs: a sarcastic kick in the ass," and I completely agree. Gorilla Biscuits-type youth crew hardcore coupled with lyrics about topics ranging from helping each other in the scene, hardcore kids losing the edge after going to college, and getting girls more active in hardcore. This disc is chock full of breakdowns, hilarious choruses, and as the ad said, some of the most positive hardcore you'll ever find. The disc is worth it if just for the line in the song "Cold-edge" which says, "You swore you'd be edge to eternity, now you're pledging a fraternity." With a little bit better recording quality and some diversity in their sound this band could be huge. **RS**

Good Riddance "Operation Phoenix" (Fat Wreck Chords) CD-On their new album, Good Riddance take a bit of a stylistic swerve, moving away from the slower, chunkier hardcore sound they had on their last CD, "Ballads From the Revolution," choosing instead to return to the more straight-ahead heavy punk sound they had on their earlier albums. I've always sort of liked Good Riddance-heck, I interviewed them for my old zine when I was a freshman in high school-but to this day I maintain that their first album is really the only essential recording they've put out. "Operation Phoenix" isn't bad, but it doesn't manage to capture the intensity that "For God and Country" had, and it doesn't have the cheezy-but-fun chugga chugga guitars that "Ballads" had. Decent but not great. **DF**

Guided By Voices "Do The Collapse" (TVT) CD-Honesty time: I am a huge Guided By Voices fan. So please take it with a grain of salt when I say that this is my favorite album of the issue. No kidding though, this one is incredible; pop music that 99.99% of the bands out there can't touch. The production of this album is light years away from the 4-track sound that has defined the band in the past, but don't let that scare you. Under the gloss lies some of the tightest and beautiful rock music today. Make no mistake, this is rock and roll, so lose the indie rock elitism. I will be calling the college station every day for a month or so, asking for "Hold On Hope" or "Liquid Indian" until the DJ finally gives into the rock. I haven't been this excited by a CD in awhile. **JM**

Guttermouth "Gorgeous" (Nitro) CD-I insisted that Ross not give this CD to me to review, because I'm a firm believer in journalistic integrity and I knew full well that I would tear this to pieces regardless of whether or not it was actually good. You see, I hate Guttermouth. Their lyrics offend me, their melodies bore me, the singer's voice makes me clench my teeth. There's a big thick line between being funny and irreverent and being racist and homophobic, and Guttermouth land firmly on the latter side. So guess what? Journalistic ideals aside, this album sucks more than anything Guttermouth has released thus far. Surprise surprise. **DF**

H20 "F.T.T.W." (Epitaph) CD-I believe it was the press sheet that said this would bridge the gap between the punk and hardcore camps. Somehow I doubt that, and I could care less either way, but you shouldn't think any less of this CD because of it. There is very little hardcore on this album, anyway; this is pretty much punk through and through. And it rocks! If you punk bands played with this much energy, maybe I would stop flinching when someone mentions the genre. Add guest vocalists like Freddy from Madball and Tim from Rancid and I'm sold. Clear the floor of dancers, I want me a circle pit. **JM**

Haste "Pursuit in the Face of Consequence" (Century Media) CD-Century Media has been putting out some great hardcore lately, which is kinda weird for a label mostly known for releasing metal stuff. That is why I was pleasantly surprised to get this disk in the mail. Haste is a 6 member band from Alabama, which is amazing in itself 'cause whoever heard of a hardcore band from Alabama? Musically they use that groove-riffage style, similar to Indecision, which lets them walk the line between awesome hardcore and in-your-face metal. Vocally they have two singers which creates an incredibly dynamic sound. One of the singers has a really high-pitched voice, much like Tom-the original singer for Indecision-, while the other has a gruffer, scarier voice, much like Artie-the new singer for Indecision. Don't get me wrong, there are obvious differences to both bands, as Haste manage to throw some melodic breakdowns in there. I think Haste might be a band to watch out for! **RS**

The Heartworms/California Stadium (Ace Fu) 7"-Weird stuff here. The Heartworms, who feature Archie Moore of Velocity Girl fame, put in one weird song with a funky bass loop and indecipherable, garbled vocals. It's a strange, shapeless song with no real beginning, middle, or end. California Stadium clock in with three short acoustic songs, and at the very least they have comprehensible lyrics and some level of songwriting. To be honest, though, I really don't see the appeal in this record. Toss this one in the "used" bin. **DF**

The Hellboys (Hellcat) 7"-First off, I'd just like to acknowledge that while many people may find this low-budget/ugly artwork, that Hellcat has been using for 45s recently, cool and really punk dude, I for one always appreciate good record design-especially from a record company as big as Hellcat. And this, my friends, is just plain ugly. Anyway, on to the music. The Hellboys are not rockably as their name might suggest. Instead, the song "Bloodshot Eyes" on side A is a very short, Pogues-esque tune, while "Everything You Learned" on the flipside is sort of like Stiff Little Fingers meets the Clash at their most straight-ahead and most polished. For \$3 this is really a bad deal, 'cause the 2

songs on here are short as hell. They're not bad musically, but c'mon Hellcat, splurge a little. **RS**

Honeyglazed "The Trouble with Girls" (Wonderdrug/Curve of the Earth) CD—Since I've never seen Honeyglazed live, I can't really tell if they are trying to be a glam band, but putting together the clues from this CD that's what I'd guess—men with painted nails and mascara eyes, women in tight vinyl pants, and then of course the synths. The lyrics are nothing to remember, in fact I think I'd rather forget them: "I got a boo boo on my finger from the kick of my uzi/I got a slice in my toenail from the slash of my machete" (track 4, "Luger(Skydiving)"). And the same goes for the vocals. Honeyglazed has two singers, a guy and a girl, but neither of them has much substance. My favorite track was track 7, "Milk and Morality," which starts out sounding like a spy theme song and, like track 3, "Under the Boot," incorporates synchronized clapping. But this does little to save the overall album. I think I would enjoy these songs more if I saw them live and performed by furtosted musicians. **Guest Reviewer Emily Rankin**

Hot Water Music "Live at the Hardback" (No Idea) CD—I just saw Hot Water Music a few nights ago in front of 300 screaming kids, so obviously the show recorded for this CD was not their final show as it was supposed to be. However, if there is one thing this CD does an excellent job of doing it is showing a great example of why so many kids came out for HWM's supposed last show. That's because no one, and I mean no punk band I've ever seen, rocks harder live than HWM. Imagine 300 kids screaming their heads off to the opening lines of "Turnstile," bobbing their heads and rocking their bodies in time to Jason's powerful bass lines and then imagine that scene in every club in every city that HWM plays. Like any live show the musicianship here was not flawless, but then again, would you really care if you were standing at the Hardback that night? This is intense, and it's one of the best damn live discs I've ever heard. **RS**

Hundred Years War "The Lidless Eye" (Magister Ludi) LP—Want to hear something weird? Well if you're still reading then I guess you do. When I got this record in the mail I thought it was the band 400 Years on Lovitt since I knew they had a hard to find first record—prior to their recent release on Lovitt—that just got reissued. So, after scanning the cover of this record for a microsecond I put it in and thought, "hey, this doesn't sound like the 400 years I know and love." Well, that 'cause it's not 400 Years. Doh! Anyways, from what I gather, this record was recorded about 8 months ago, but for some reason took a really long time to come out. It's really creepy and I'm sure a reviewer that wasn't merely killing time until his plane flight back to Ithaca in 3 hours would have a certain "core" (add your own prefix) to label this, but since I'm dog tired, I can't think of one. Thus, I'll just call this blues-core 'cause I hear some blues underneath the screaming and distortion. This is very groovy in that blues-core way that the kids seem to love so much nowadays. **RS**

The Impossibles "Anthology" (Fueled by Ramen) CD—I remember a time not too long ago when you had to be a special sort of band, with a devoted legion of fans and numerous hard-to-find recordings, in order to merit getting an anthology. Now it seems like every band that's tossed out a CD or two and a couple of 7"s is getting an anthology, and labels are releasing best-hits compilations of larger bands after maybe three or four CDs, if that. I can fully see why, say, J Church could use a compilation of their greatest songs, but the Impossibles? Who? I mean, hell, these guys play some decent ska-punk a la Less Than Jake, but the last

good anthology I bought was from Minor Threat, and this ain't Minor Threat. No way. **DF**

Incured "Stand As One" (Prawda) CD—You gotta love Switzerland. I mean, they make the best cheese in the world, they are the home of the international political debate forum, and they make some damn generic hardcore. With album titles like "Stand As One" what do you expect? And that band name? Sheesh! Go read my article on dumb indie rock trends. Incured sound like Snapcase, and they're not all that bad actually. I mean, I wouldn't run to your local Swiss hardcore distro to find this 'cause there are a million other bands right in your back yard playing the same thing, but it is competent stuff. By the way, what is HBxHC? It says that on the CD face. Is that like Switzerland's answer to NYxHC? And if so what the fuck does "hb" stand for? I bet it means "hard-up boys." **RS**

Indecision "To Live and Die in New York City" (Exit) CD—I first encountered the mighty Indecision when I happened to see them in NYC a few years back, and man was I impressed. I thought that Tom's vocals were vicious and threatening (and that high-pitched scream he has is so much better than that guy from Brother's Keeper), not to mention the guitar/drum assault on the senses. I've heard of a lot of rumors about this band—none of which I care to mention—but it's good to hear that Indecision has made it through all the lies and survived. This time they offer eight songs, new and old, with their new singer, Artie Philie, who also sings in Milhouse (for that matter Justin and Rachel also play in Milhouse), and they rock. This music is groovy, powerful, and scary. I never thought Indecision would be able to top the songs they gave to that Shai Hulud split on Revelation last year, but this disc proves that Indecision is one of the few hardcore bands out there actually trying to push the limits of aggression. Anyone into hardcore will not be disappointed. **RS**

In my Eyes "Demo/Live" (Big Wheel) CD—I got a lot of shit for the review I did of In My Eyes' full length on Revelation last year... basically because I liked it. And, after getting this, I still like In My Eyes. Sure they're not doing anything new or different—I mean, they're basically Gorilla Biscuits with a few more mosh choruses and some more melody—but I can't help bob my head and feel the need to jump up and down when I listen to them. This CD compiles a few of IME's early shows as well as their demo cassette that for some reason Big Wheel felt was different enough from their album to warrant a re-release. In my honest opinio, this disc is

only for the hardcore In My Eyes fan because their full length is better recorded, but I know that there are those of you out there who gobble up every youth crew recording you can get your hands on. And with this you will not be disappointed. **RS**

Integrity 2000 (Victory) CD—My one and only complaint with this CD is that I was expecting something different. All the ads had hyped this to be way different from any other Integrity release; it's not. Fortunately, I like the old Integrity, so this CD is like an early Christmas present. Personally, Integrity is my favorite band in the "metal masquerading as hardcore" category. Pounding double bass, evil screamed vocals, chug-chug guitars; there's even a quasi-metal ballad on here! Lose the long wanky Psywarfare stuff (which I like, but it doesn't belong on here) and the disc is all set. So if you're looking for a new Integrity sound, look elsewhere. But if you are an Integrity fan or have heard good things about other Integrity releases, this one will not disappoint. **JM**

Isis "The Red Sea" (Second Nature) CD—I've been waiting to get something by these guys for a while, as I heard that Aaron Turner—the owner of Hydra Head Records—plays guitar for this band. He does, and while I like Aaron a lot in the dealings I have had with him, I do not, however, like his band. Musically they sound a little bit like newer Bloodlet: slow, heavy, grinding guitars along with brooding bass lines and pummeling drum beats. Vocally, it's just screaming and in that depraved-to-death way. Part of this CD is made up of the Isis demo which circulated last year, and the rest, I guess, are new songs. An interesting listen, and they're definitely doing something different than the pack. Unfortunately the pack is sometimes right. **RS**

Jason Faulkner "Can you still Feel?" (Elektra) CD—After Jason's seven inch on Lovitt (which Dan reviewed last issue), I was intrigued. So, at Dan's prompting, I bought this former frontman of Jellyfish and The Greys' new solo album. Usually I try to stay away from major label releases in my reviews unless they strike me strongly in some way or another. Let me tell you this is great. Slick, radio-friendly pop along the lines of better Ben Folds Five meets early/mid David Bowie. From the moment this CD busts out with the rocking "Author Unknown," this album, on which Faulkner plays almost every instrument, is a gem. For those not afraid of polished, big-budget pop done right, I totally recommend this! **RS**

Joan of Arc "Live in Chicago, 1999" (Jade Tree) CD—The hipster indie rockers may have drooled all

over the jazzy, minimalist sounds of Joan of Arc, but I never quite understood them. Their music was so sparse and unengaging that I could never see it as more than relaxing background music. But "Live in Chicago, 1999," which ironically enough is not a live album, is a great leap forward for the band, who remain weird and sparse at times, but also have a few songs that, I'm not afraid to say it, rock. Are those drums I'm hearing in between the blips and bleeps? Did I just catch myself humming along to the song "(I'm 5 Senses) None of them Common?" There are still a couple songs here that I had to skip because they didn't have enough depth or complexity to hold my interest. But this is still the most intricate and interesting thing that Joan of Arc has done. Tortoise fans have always taken note of this band, now Getup Kids fans can too. And Joan of Arc gets big time hipster bonus points for patterning their liner artwork after Jean-Luc Godard's brilliantly twisted 1967 French New Wave film "Week-end." Not that it's necessary to consume one to understand the other, but it can be assumed that any band that's familiar with Godard will also be intelligent enough to release interesting, multilayered music. **DF**

Jon Cougar Concentration Camp "Hot Shit" (BYO) CD—Jon Cougar Concentration Camp, arguably the best (or worst) named band in punk rock, has pretty much stuck to the same style of bare-bones punk rawk throughout their career, so if you've heard one album, you've essentially heard them all. This repressing of a 10" originally released on Mullethead Records even has cover art that is practically indistinguishable from the leather jacket featured on the cover of JCCC's Ramones cover record, "Too Tough to Die." I've never been too able to get into their sound, on this album or any other, but I did note that there are some pretty decent guitar solos on this one, and the cover of the Vindictives' "Invisible Man" is a keeper. I'm still not too impressed, though. **DF**

Joshua "A Whole New Theory" (Doghouse) CD—After listening to this CD maybe 30 times I finally feel like I'm ready to do an adequate review. First off, it's good to see that Joshua has finally managed to overcome their mixing problems which plagued their previous recordings. This is good, 'cause this CD has great recording quality (oh yeah, it was produced and recorded by J. Robbins) and now I can finally catch all the intricacies of Joshua's music. The songs on this disc are great: dynamic, emotional, rocking, gutsy. There are even some really good breakdowns which are commonly found in music a lot harder. The addition of a second guitar player has really helped Joshua's sound and made it fuller and denser. Overall, I find this album really moving from the artwork to the music. But, at the risk of making this CD unappealing, I must say that Dan's whiny vocals can get really annoying after a while, however that might be the kind of thing that some people would warm up to over time. After 15 listens, though... I haven't. **RS**

The Judas Factor "Ballads in Blue China" (Revelation) CD—The press release says that these guys have "discovered what differentiates art from noise". Cough... bullshit... cough... Anyway, this is a decent album that does have a lot of things going for it. For one thing, I love hardcore with a noisy edge, and this one delivers. But somewhere floating in the discord, there are some beautiful melodies lurking right below the surface. The juxta-

Dean's Top 10 Reasons Kids Who Read This Zine Should Appreciate Hip Hop (DU)

1. Biz Markie.
2. Punk rock and rap grew up in tandem from the same period and often crossed over in their mutual development.
3. KRS-ONE appearing on Sick Of It All's first album.
4. Once you grow up, the only thing that's really punk rock is understanding someone different and how they express themselves. Challenge yourself early.
5. It's about time you had some variety.
6. Do you want Limp Bizkit and Rage Against The Machine to always interpret something FOR you, or do you want the real shit?
7. Hip Hop is currently blowing up like independent rock did in the 80's.
8. Social protest. You thought rock&roll was gonna take all the weight?
9. Jello Biafra appearing on Ice-T's second album.
10. It's our generation, damn it. Everything since has been affected by it.

position of the two is what makes this band great. The fact that the singer is great at screechy gruff vocals is an added bonus. Don't let the ads fool you: these guys haven't created a new recipe, but they have done wonders with the old one. Recommended. JM

Julie Doiron "Will You Still Love Me?" (Tree) CD- Hello, what have we here? This certainly is something different for Tree to put out. Slow, very minimalist acoustic music by Canada's own Julie Doiron. I don't think I've ever heard anything like this. It's a lot of arpeggios and two-note-plucked-chords, that are really dreamy and airy. While we're on the subject of guitars, the tone of the guitar is warm, rich, and beautiful by itself which is so different than the chugga chugga guitars I usually hear in reviews. Moving on to Ms. Doiron's voice, well, that too is unusual. It is not fancy or angst-filled or even overly-dramatic, but rather urgent and tender and sort of sad. There are only 5 songs here, and they go by before you know it, but I guarantee that if you're into anything like Jenn Wood or any of Elliott Smith's lo-fi early stuff, then I would look hard for this. This is the most emotional disc of this issue... and it does it all without whining or loud/soft/loud arrangements. I like this a real lot. RS

Juno "This is the way it Goes and Goes..." (Desoto) CD- When I first put this CD in my discman and pressed play, I was greeted with a rather weird diatribe of some heroine-user voice over droning guitars and a weird sample loop in the background. I thought, man oh man, why have Jade Tree, Sub Pop, and finally Desoto all been scrambling to sign this terrible band. Then I go to second track where the CD really takes off. This band manages to stuff so many textures and emotions into this record. Sometimes I hear the Van Pelt and at others something akin to a Bob Mould project. This is one of those CDs that must grow on the listener to realize the full effect. This is good stuff, although it does not, I admit, grab me. RS

Juno (Mag Wheel) 7" I'm pretty sure these guys used to be on Sub Pop, but this is the first time I've heard them so I don't have much of a comparison point. Side A is melodic emo with an alterna-rock flavor. Side B is weird and ambient and didn't really do much for me. Average. DF

Kill the Messenger "All the Angels Crash and Burn" (Indecision) CD- Indecision's roster seems to be really inbred. I mean, you get Keith Barney in at least 3 Indecision bands (this is the one band that Keith is not in), and Paul Miner in 2 (Paul plays bass in Death by Stereo as well). Weird. It's too bad I can't give Indecision any good reviews this issue 'cause they're probably the best hardcore label on the west coast right now. Anyway, KTM play hardcore that is exactly—no nineties twist or anything—just like Black Flag. I mean, I love Black Flag as much as the next guy. As a matter of fact, "First Four Years" was the first punk CD I ever bought, way back when I was fourteen. But, geez. KTM sound like "Damaged" was rewritten and re-recorded with better sound quality. This band is Black Flag right down to the Henry Rollins style vocals and guitar dissonance. Puh-lease. At least copy the Germs or some band that you might actually have a chance at topping. RS

Kill Your Idols "This Is Just The Beginning" (Blackout!) CD- Wow, this CD is nothing short of awesome. Great hardcore that bares some resemblance to youth crew stuff, though with a dash more punk rock to spice things up. The main reason I like this CD is because it's fun - I don't think the smile leaves my face for the 15 minutes that it's on. It's all here: rad (can I say rad?) breakdowns, sing-along choruses, and rough vocals at a speed that shows no indication that it's going

to slow. Early Sick Of It All and Warzone would be a good start on what Kill Your Idols sounds like. Let the good times roll. JM

The Kill Van Kull "Human Bomb" (Eyeball) CD- I could swear I reviewed this same record for the last issue, except that record was on vinyl, was on a different label, and this one has three more songs. I said in the last issue that this sounded like Sweet Belly Freakdown. Now, I'm thinking more along the lines of Swiz, but SBFD and Swiz are really the same thing. There you have it. Let's see, what else did I say in the last issue? Oh yeah... I like this. RS

The Klopecs (Mutant Pop) CD- Okay this music sounds like the Ramones. But enough about that stuff. Let's get to the picture on the inside of the sleeve of this record. It depicts the three teenage(?) boys in this band walking along, backs to the camera. It wouldn't be such a big deal (although a punk band walking down an alley in a photograph is so cliché) but written on each one of their leather jackets is a big fat "K"... and there are three of them. So put three "K's" next to each other and what do you get? KKK! Now, I'm not saying that these boys—who play pretty catchy music—are nazis or anything, but it is a seriously poor artwork decision. I am fully aware that K is the first letter of their band name and there are three guys in the band so they why not. But, c'mon people, have some fucking taste (you've gotta understand: I'm Jewish and Jewish people always look for subversive Nazi imagery in everything they see.). RS

Korea Girl (Asian Man) CD- Here's a local Bay Area band that I unfortunately didn't discover until they had broken up. D'oh. Korea Girl sound like a slightly less weird and more straight-ahead Pavement with alternating female vocals... maybe add a touch of Ivy or Jale or one of those female-fronted indie pop bands. Fairly good stuff. DF

Lando's 45 (Harmless) CD- Lando's 45 features ex-members of The Bollweevils and 30 Seconds Deep and damn do they sound like Screeching Weasel. However, they sound like the better side of Screeching Weasel. Now, as everyone knows there are in fact two different facets to SW. One facet is that goofy, blazing punk which lacks any real continuity as captured in songs like "I Hate Suburbia." The other facet is the side which makes Screeching Weasel a great band that knows who to turn everyday life into catchy, emotional, punk-as-fuck-pop songs. The first song on the B-side of this record is a bit less straight-forward and takes a bit more of a melodic hardcore approach which, although not like SW, still sounds inspired and fun, while the second song goes back to SW. This is good... real good, and I really really want to hear a full length by this band. RS

Leatherface/Hot Water Music (BYO) CD- I've heard so much about Leatherface before: that they sound like everyone's favorite Berkeley punk band, American Steel; that they are incredibly influential— even directly influencing the great Hot Water Music; that this is their first new recording in like 7 years; etc. Honestly, all I hear here is a less rocking, less tight, Hot Water Music sound-alike band (can you really blame me if I heard HWM years before I had even ever heard of Leatherface) that has pretty bad recording quality and terrible mix levels (you can barely hear the vocals!). The Hot Water Music side of this disc is interesting. A certain singer, for a very good indie-rock band told me that after HWM were finished recording their upcoming album for Some Records, they had literally no songs— not to mention creative energy— left after the full length. Yet, they were under contract with BYO so they had to go in and write/record 5 songs in less than a week. This, my friends, is exactly how the HWM sections sounds: rushed,

forced, and tired. I love HWM as much as the next guy, but this is the worst stuff they have ever put on tape. I am looking forward to hearing the upcoming Leatherface full length which should be out by the next issue, but as for both bands on this CD, I will pass for now. RS

Leatherface "Cherry Knowle" (BYO) CD- This re-release of Leatherface's first album, originally put out in 1989, lacks the emotional depth of their mid-career recordings like "Mush" and the recording quality of their recent split album with Hot Water Music. But the music is unmistakably Leatherface, and even if the album was only a portent of greater things yet to come, it still was a vital slab of musical history, and proof that from the get-go, singer Frankie Stubbs' voice was one of the most beautifully gruff things to ever come out of punk rock. Like an emo Motorhead, Leatherface were a band that defied genres, and while this may not be their best piece of work, it's worth checking out nonetheless. DF

Leaves Of Lothlorien "Mallorn" (Garbage Czar) CD- This is interesting. Quirky accents and sounds coupled to a rather-Weston sounding pop act. It gets a bit louder on occasion, and the lead vocalist is rather high pitched. There's a neat off-beat charm here in a nutty 80's college rock way. I suppose this could be considered "twee-pop" but I was never too sure what that meant. Something minimal yet rather warm sounding, with the occasional soaring bit. They probably wouldn't like being called emo, and while this has the mood down, it's more of a throwback to a kind of Simple Machines-early-90s indie rock sound. Later on in the disc, they move in on a more Fugazi-esque sound. This certainly has its moments. DP

Left Out "25 Cent Serenade" (Plan-it-X) CD- I had high hopes for this disc since the packaging was cool and 'cause it's easily the most DIY CD I've gotten in a while... which is cool. Nevertheless, the music fell short of my expectations. Left Out sound like a pop-punk band along the lines of Nothing Cool— always minus points—, and they sound like a way to kill stress/attract girls during junior year of high school. Overall, this is pretty ordinary punk that has high ambitions. Their press sheet says they draw around 200 kids a night in Kentucky, but if their massaced version of "Every Breath you Take" is any indication I really doubt that's true. RS

Lickety Split (Torque) CD- This has to be one of the most boring CDs I've ever heard. There's no one snoring on it, but it sure is putting me to sleep. Does the fact that Brian Baker of Minor Threat and Bad Religion produced this and played guitar on half the album redeem it? No. Boring mid-tempo punkrock with lyrics that sound sort of political but everything is too vague for me to be sure. Why didn't Epitaph put this out? JM

Limp "Fine Girl" (Fueled by Raman) CDep- I guess this ep was meant to be a teaser to the new Limp on Honest Don's (which, ironically enough, I reviewed in the last issue). Let's put it this way: if you like catchy pop-punk a la Green Day or Diesel Boy then you will dig this lots. I, however, think Limp's first record, "Pop & Disorderly" was the best Limp stuff I've heard. Their subsequent records, while still good, fall a bit... well, short. RS

Luck of Aleia "Six Songs" (Caulfield) CDep- Law of Inertia historians who have read our first issue (in other words: myself, Ross, and [possibly] our parents) will remember that, for some insane reason known only to ourselves, we originally abbreviated our magazine title as LOA, not LOI. Somewhere along the line, we realized that LOA

actually stood for *Law of Anertia*, which raised some problems because Anertia is not a word. At least an English word. And God knows we didn't want to give the zine a foreign or exotic flavor. So by the next issue we re-christened ourselves LOI, but I still fondly remember the LOA days, those beautiful shining days when we were nothing but a pair of bright-eyed, foolhardy kids from Iowa looking to make a name for ourselves in the dog-eat-dog world of zine publishing. Then came the fame, and the cocaine, and the hookers... and the rest, as they say, is history. Which all goes to prove the following point: I believe that Luck of Aleia has stolen our name. I mean, think about it! Aren't the similarities a little too close for comfort? Both names contain the word "of," for starters. If that isn't a clue that they're blatantly ripping us off, then I don't know what is. But I suppose there's enough room for us to peacefully coexist, because they're a band and we're not a band. We're a magazine. We write stuff on paper. That's our bag, man. Luck of Aleia, on the other hand, is an indie rock band. Whew. That was a little close for comfort. DF

Lucky Jeremy "Enigma Cum Laude" (Lucky Jeremy) CDep- I love "a boy and his guitar" style folk music, be it from Nick Drake or Elliott Smith or anyone in between. There's certainly no need for music to have big thick guitars or giant recording budgets; some of the best music I know is chummed out of bedrooms on four-tracks, a la the Folk Implosion. This ep from Lucky Jeremy has simple, unornamental production values, and I like that. The guitar strumming, while it doesn't necessarily boast the most complicated fingerwork, is pretty and dissonant. But the singer's voice, which exudes "sensitive indie boy" like there's no tomorrow, is a high-pitched, nasal falsetto that might possibly work in another context, but when it's put in the spotlight with only acoustic guitar to back it up, it comes off as grating and therefore ruins whatever beauty might otherwise be found in the songs. At least Nick Drake, melancholy and introverted as he was, knew how to sing. DF

Lungfish "The Unanimous Hour" (Dischord) CD- I always thought Lungfish fit more into the slower, stranger side of goth music than they ever did into the Dischord sound. I mean, c'mon, all this band is and ever was is indie-rock for ex-Dungeons and Dragons aficionados. Those wandering drum beats, relentlessly lazy/unprogressive guitar lines, and those bass lines that do more to create the image of a ship rocking in the waves than they do a crowd of kids rocking out. It's cool that Lungfish is doing something different, and has been for like 10 years now, but guys... there's a reason no one's copied you. RS

Lung Leg "Maid to Minx" (Southern) CD- I'll fess up to the facts: I listen to a lot of boy bands. No, not the Backstreet Boys or 98 Degrees, I'm talking about bands that predominately have penises instead of vaginas (5th grade health is paying off). So it's nice to get a CD from a band consisting of grrrls, if only to disrupt the monotony. Lung Leg shy away from the more heavy bands like Bikini Kill and Sleater Kinney and end up at the end of the pool with Tuscadero and Shonen Knife; you know, the more pop-punk stuff. To be honest, this is a real fun album, one that quickly makes me tap my feet and bounce along. I'd call it cute, but I'm afraid that band members might beat me up. JM

Lustre King "Shoot the Messenger" (Southern) CD- Remember those SAT tests you took back in high school that made you put together ridiculously abstract analogies? Here's one that I made myself: Lustre King: Southern Records :: Baby Gopal: Victory Records. If you knew how ridiculously out of place Baby Gopal sounds on

Victory, then you'd get what I meant. Lustre King are hard to peg musically, but you can be damn sure they don't sound a whit like, say, Karate. They sound more like what Fugazi would sound like if they bedecked themselves with turntables and synths. Strange comparison? Well, yeah. But it's a strange band, too. At least Lustre King can mix turntables and guitars without sounding like some second-rate white boy rap band. Their music is tense, aggressive, and above all, strange. Delving into uncharted musical territory doesn't always produce ear-pleasing results, but you've got to hand it to Lustre King for having developed a sound all their own. **DF**

Mad Parade "MP" (Doctor Strange) CD- This rocks in that Guns 'n Wankers/Snuff type way. Plain and simple, but I'm confused about something: on the back of the 7" are 4 pics of each of the members of this band. Right over each picture are each member's signatures. Cool. I'm totally down with autographed 7"s 'cause that way when Mad Parade becomes famous and are rock stars I will have a seven inch with their autographs. But, I am led to wonder. Why did they choose my 7" to sign. Was it because they signed each one of the 1000 copies of this record that Dr. Strange pressed? Maybe, as they're also had numbered, but I think the real reason is that Doctor Bill Strange (owner DS Records) told them to sign the promo going to Law of Inertia is that we're a really important zine and they want to butter us up in attempt to garner a favorable review. Well it worked, 'cause this record is \$3 well spent. **RS**

Man or Astro-man? "Eeviac" (Touch & Go) CD- With one foot firmly rooted in the classic surf instrumentals of Link Wray and the Ventures, the other foot planted in the junk-pop sensibilities of 50's sci-fi films and rock 'n' roll, and their arms reaching towards the cosmos, it would seem that Man or Astro-man had enough stylistic bases covered to appeal to nearly everybody. Indeed, this hugely prolific band from - where else? - Alabama has built up a dedicated cult of fans who dig their space alien shtick and clever packaging as much as they dig their increasingly electronic surf sound. But if Man or Astro-man's earlier records were homages to the great surf gods of the 50's and 60's, then their new album, "Eeviac," which is replete with samples and computerized keyboards, owes as much to, say, Sun Ra or Kraftwerk as it does to Dick Dale. Not that that's necessarily a bad thing. But if you're expecting another one of those Man or Astro-man records that you remember from the days of yore, don't get your hopes up. There are some surf-tinged gems here, but it seems like they're slowly becoming the exception to the rule. **DF**

Man Without Plan "Shop Talk" (Creep/APKWIAB) CD- I've always known that Barclay (pronounced BARK-ley) of *A Punk Kid Walks Into A Bar* fame was a good writer, but it's news to me that he can belt out a pretty good tune, too. Barclay's band Man Without Plan doesn't have the intelligently snotty lyrics that one would expect from reading his zine, but they play excellent melodic punk that sounds somewhat like a cross between Jawbreaker and Lifetime. There's a tinge of pop, but nothing too shiny or clean; the edges are nice and rough here and that gives the

music a really nice sense of emotional urgency. Good drawings on the inside, too. I like this. **DF**

Marine Research "Sounds from the Gulf Stream" (K) CD- I'm not going to make this one of my top picks of the issue, because it would hardly be fair to award the honor to the same band two issues in a row, considering how many worthy contenders. That said, this CD is everything Marine Research's two previous 7"s led me to believe it would be, and then some. It's got the cutesy guitar jangle and girl vocals that one would expect from a band with former members of cuddlecore superstars Heavenly, but it also has - dare I say it? - a sort of sophistication that elevates it above the adorable but somewhat two-dimensional pop that Heavenly played. And there's just enough wah-wah guitar and bleep-bleep keyboards to give the band the aquatic sound that its name suggests. Although "You and a Girl" has a vocal refrain that sounds dangerously similar to "My Favorite Things" from *The Sound of Music*, most of the songs here are gems, and the album is poppy and funky enough to stay in heavy rotation on my stereo for some time to come. **DF**

Me First and the Gimme Gimme "Are a Drag" (Fat Wreck) CD- So, this is the second full length by an "all star" punk rock cover band, including members of No Use for a Name, NOFX, Swingin' Utters, and Lagwagon. I could really care less that this band even exists. I mean, the first song is pretty cool - a power-pop version of Kermit the Frog's "Over the Rainbow" - but once the novelty of a punk band covering random show-tunes and oldies wears off, this CD is pretty thin. Good for two listens, then good for playing frisbee. **RS**

Midvale "Five and Six (Tie)" (Status) CDep- Yet another good disk by Status Recordings. The late Midvale, a Massachusetts emo-core band pump out six tunes sure to make every emo kid in the place jump up and down, side to side, all the while making that face (I've seen you do it) that means the music is hitting you where it counts. Sometimes Midvale remind me of Falling Forward but that could just be in the vocals. Musically, Midvale play urgent melodic hardcore that knows how to floor a crowd. Although I never saw Midvale, and I never will since they broke up, I'm sure that anyone playing this music would go so nuts that the act of playing a guitar would be a feat. This is really good. **RS**

MIJ "Four Song CDEP" (Caulfield) CD- First things first: work harder on a title for the CD, someone in the group must have some imagination! That said, this is one of the best emo discs I have heard in while; it's driving, desperate, and sincere, just the way I like it. They pull off the boy-girl vocals, and the guitar is noisy enough to be interesting but not enough to distract from the rest of the song. The most obvious reference here would be Rainer Maria, but why cop out? This CD is good on its own merits. As always, my biggest complaint is that four songs are not enough, give me more. Please. **JM**

Mike Ladd "Live From Paris [The Iran Contra Scandal Memorial Album]" (Home Style Cooking) CD- Ok, tell me if this sounds familiar: Groundbreaking American artist is picked up by major label imprint, releases crazy deep album, label goes under shortly thereafter, record needs a push to just get it into the dollar bin. Artist finds out, "hey, they really like my stuff in the REST of the world" and buys a plane ticket. Sometimes, you gotta step back and recognize - most Americans do not appreciate talent or originality. Mike Ladd is from New York and so is his music, a wildly creative live hop-hop poetic spoken word laced with psychedelia, ambient, and what some trendy heads might call "trip-hop". Seriously, son is

amazing. I've seen this guy hit the stage solo, program his own beats on a MPC that looks like it was dropped down an elevator shaft, and transfix the audience on a deep thought headrush. This is his second cd, and features several tracks from his first on Scratchie and several unreleased. Mike here is backed by live bass and drums, turntables, some cat on tape loops and the ever-present sampler. Gritty and muscular, this is very roots material, as it duly embraces the Freestyle Fellowship and The Last Poets. Granted, these are topical comparisons, because Mike Ladd is really doing his own thing, and it hasn't been done before. Don't sleep on his upcoming album, Welcome To The Afterfuture, although most of this country will. **DP**

Miniwatt "Metropolis" (Sampson) 7"- Miniwatt was formerly known as Broadcast. Their new name sucks 'cause it screams lame indie rock, but I was pleasantly surprised. It is arty (read: distorted vocals and random noises) with Devo being ever-so-slightly channeled. Somewhat choppy musical style with guitars used as both melodic and percussive instruments. I liked the random noises and willingness to do stuff that's so unpopular. Minus points for the talk-singing that really bohered me. Pretty cool. **PR**

MU330 (Asian Man) CD- It's been a number of years since I've been to St. Louis, Missouri, but I have two friends who grew up there, and according to them, MU330 are kings of the Midwestern ska scene. I always thought that their big song from a few years ago, "Hoosier Love," had something to do with the high school basketball rags-to-riches story depicted in the film "Hoosiers," but it turns out, according to my contacts, that it's about those metalhead mullet types who wear Blue Oyster Cult t-shirts and drive pickup trucks. Out West we call 'em heshers, but that's cultural differences for ya. In any case, MU330 have gone downhill a bit since their "Hoosier Love" days, as this CD explores no new territory - just standard, dime-a-dozen ska punk. Next time I want to listen to a Midwestern ska band, I'm going to turn on Animal Chin instead. **DF**

Muckafurgason "The Gay EP" (Deep Elm) CDep- Very few bands style-hop as frequently as the oddly-named Muckafurgason, and although they can't always quite pull off certain genres (they still have a way to go until they can get the disco thing down, for example), they're still pretty damn good. On this EP, which consists entirely of songs dealing with "gayness" - not just homosexuality, mind you, but also mirth and joy. "I Wanna Be Your Guy" is such a sweet song that I put it on a mix tape for a girl that I had a crush on, even though it's ostensibly directed at another guy. No matter. Muckafurgason have always been a creative band, but with this album they're not only creative but highly listenable as well. Good stuff. **DF**

The Muffs "Alert Today Alive Tomorrow" (Honest Don's) CD- Any loyal *LOI* reader will know that the Muffs can do no wrong by me. After all, their singer Kim Shattuck is, in my opinion, the most beautiful person in the history of the world. Never mind that she "eats guys like me for breakfast," at least according to Larry Livermore. All I know is that Kim can belt out a tune better than anyone else, and her supremely talented three-piece band pretty much represents the pinnacle of pop-punk songcraft. The Muffs' new album, "Alert Today Alive Tomorrow," at times lacks the raw energy of earlier releases, particularly when compared to their second album "Blonder and Blonder," but even though Kim's high-decibel scream is applied a bit more sparsely than before, this still rocks, no doubt about it. God, I'm in love. **DF**

Mustard Plug "Pray for Mojo" (Hopeless) CD-

Yawn. Another ska-punk band playing ska-punk music. After a certain point it becomes quite difficult to tell Mustard Plug apart from, say MU330 or Skankin' Pickle. Normally, with a record like this, I'd just say "it isn't bad, but it isn't anything special." But the truth is, this isn't good and it isn't anything special. I mean, sure, I've heard worse, and this is musically competent. But will I ever listen to it again after writing this review? Nope. Diehard ska-punk bands will enjoy this, as I'm well aware that Mustard Plug are well-regarded in the ska community. But as for me, ix-nay on the a-ska, okay? **DF**

My Superhero "Solid State 14" (Risk) CD- I'm guessing that no one west of Nevada will be able to find this record, and that's okay with me. This CD was handed to me at a Hippos show (I had to go to that show for my summer job) by this cute girl who got a copy of my zine and claimed she was the sister of the singer. That sister was the best thing about this record, 'cause this is 17 tracks of sissy, boring, radio-friendly, un-gutsy, ska I've ever heard. If this band were playing like 4 years ago they may have made it back to my CD player, but it's 1999 and I have a sneaking suspicion that this band is merely hopping on a bandwagon that's running out of horsepower. **RS**

NJ Joystick "New Song for the Ride" (Annoyance Records) CD- Everyone in a while I hear a disc by a band that is good - has really well written songs and more hooks than a fishing boat - but is just missing something. Maybe that's why bigger budget records have a better chance at being great. I mean, with more money they can spend more time recording, mixing, fine-tuning-songs-in-the-studio, etc. This is seems to be the problem with Joystick's first full length. The songs are great in that Zoinks/All sort of way. And, it's catchy, fun, and emotional to boot. But, there's just something missing here. I think it's that the music seems sort of rushed. Not thrown together, 'cause obviously a lot of work went into the song writing process - and it shows 'cause they're great songs - but just like they had to get it pumped out on tape pretty quickly for lack of time and money. Overall, this CD does not deserve a harsh review, 'cause I'll be damned if "October's Already Over," "Man Can Fly" and "Counting Stars" aren't some of the best power pop songs I've heard in a while. It's just that sometimes it takes more than great songs to make a great record. **RS**

No Knife "Fire in the City of Automotons" (Time Bomb) CD- Everyone's favorite out-of-place-on-a-major-would-be-indie-rockers are back with a very ambitious work. Although, I like this album a lot, I think that No Knife's strength in quirky melodies and harmonies was a bit stronger on "Hit Man Dreams," their last release. Don't get me wrong, this is really good emo/art-core, and the quirky pop is still there - with the hard edge - that makes you want to sway back and forth. However, it seems that No Knife are trying to fit into the emo label they used live on the outskirts of with this record. Maybe they've been listening to a lot of Jimmy Eat World or something, 'cause the songs are a lot more straightforward and rocking instead of the strangeness I liked so much on their earlier stuff. This is very good, possibly an apex for other bands, but for No Knife I have to say I like the last record better. **RS**

Not From There "Sand on Seven" (Kool Arrow) CD- I am well aware that, as a journalist, I occupy a privileged position that draws the awe and envy of all the little peons milling around down on planet Earth. I know this, of course, because of the bushels of fan mail I receive every day and the ease with which I can get laid. (Insert sarcasm here). But you know why you ought to be really jealous,

folks? Because as a zine writer, I get to read publicity sheets, and that means I get to read press sheets from Barbara Mitchell and Deluxe Media. Barbara is the only publicist I know who opts to use a sort of stream-of-consciousness narrative to advertise her bands, choosing to talk more about shopping for coffee or her secret desire to be a continent (?) than the bands themselves. But her writing is so absolutely bizarre that I must admit that it does catch my eye, which says a lot, considering how many press sheets I have to trudge through on a daily basis. Deluxe media would be an unstoppable media powerhouse, if it weren't for the fact that I'm not too into the bands they represent; the Muffs are great, but Alien Crime Syndicate? Not From There? The former I've already sacked earlier in the review section, and the latter, while not as atrocious, still aren't my cup of tea. Not From There has had an interesting history (originally from London and Austria, currently lives in Australia, has had a hit song sung entirely in German and has been deported from several countries), but musically? I'll let Barbara describe them: "Groove-heavy, angular guitar rock." The bio sheet also compares them to the Fall, which may explain why I don't like them, because I hate the Fall. Ech. DF

Nymb "The Glass Eye EP" (Harmless) CDep- I hate to sound so crassly commercial, but Nymb isn't going to attract any new fans with their stunning cover art. A good CD, in my mind, has good packaging as well as good music, and small light blue cursive on a dark brown background doesn't exactly make for thrilling eye candy. It's a shame, too, because this is some beautiful stuff. There are only three songs here, which makes the CD a bit skimpy, but they're lush, gorgeous and slow, with female vocals that should appeal to fans of Jejuné or My Bloody Valentine. This isn't music to cry to; it's music to close your eyes and bliss out to. Dress it up with some pretty pictures and I think you've got something worth checking out. DF

One Man Army "Dead End Stories" (Adeline) CD- Big juicy production with drums that crack like bullet shots and vocals that sound like they've been shaped by a lifetime of whiskey and cigarettes help to make this a very good punk album along the lines of the Swingin' Uters or Dropkick Murphys. True to their album title, One Man Army sing songs about punk rockers down on their luck but with fire in their hearts. These guys pick up where the old East Bay punk bands like Screw 32 left off, and it sounds great. Good music to drink to with all your pierced & tattooed buddies. DF

Pedro the Lion "The Only Reason I Feel Secure" (Made in Mexico) CDep- I think you have to be in a certain mood to listen to Pedro the Lion, because while their brand of Emo with a capital E isn't going to get anyone to put on their dancing shoes and boogie, it has a beautifully melancholy sound that's perfect for gazing either at the stars or at one's shoes. Simple, introspective, and slow, Pedro the Lion's songs unfold at their own pace, without sudden stops or starts. I'm put off by the highly religious nature of some of the songs (like "Be Thou My Vision, which is as overtly Christian as any emo song I've ever heard), but some of the lyrics are very poetic, and the music, languid as it may be, is undeniably beautiful. DF

Penfold "Amateurs and Professionals" (Rosewood Union) CD- Sample lyric: "I've

been thinking all day, sitting by this window, remembering how the smile on your face could make me blush, and I can't comprehend how someone with your eyes could ever disappear and break your heart." This sounds like Mineral, and you know how I feel about Mineral. RS

Pennywise "Straight Ahead" (Epitaph) CD- Yup, this is Pennywise. Everyone's favorite SoCal hardcore band that shows H2O who wears the pants in the Epitaph family is back. This time Pennywise offer 17 "straight ahead" melodic hardcore songs that sound exactly like every other release they've ever put out. Except there are a few major differences: 1) the songs here are not as catchy or urgent as on "Unknown Road" which is my favorite Pennywise record to date; 2) there is a blatant political awareness on this record. I don't know where this political concern suddenly came from, as none of the 'Wise's earlier recordings were this vocal about government corruption; 3) the times have changed and people move on. No longer are the days when the whole punk rock world is focused on what's coming out of Epitaph's doors. It seems that everyone is bit bored with the SoCal scene right now, and thus they have moved on to bands outside SoCal (even if those bands sound exactly like the SoCal stuff... cough... H2O... cough). Perhaps if this record were released about 5 years ago I would have found it a vital addition to my collection. But now, a pretty good Pennywise record just doesn't make it back to my disc-man. RS

Pezz "Warmth and Sincerity" (BYO) CD- Well, this isn't amazing, but it's a big step forward from Pezz's last album, "One Last Look." The singer must have taken some vocal lessons from Jawbreaker, because the vocals sound like they could have been lifted from "24 Hour Revenge Therapy," and I mean that in a good way. This sounds like a cross between Jawbreaker and the Marshes but with a slightly heavier guitar section. DF

Piebald "If it Weren't for Venetian Blinds it would be Curtains for us All" (Big Wheel Recreation) CD- Let's quote the press sheet for this one: "The line between witty and pretentious is a fine line... but Piebald have created a separate space to exist where they can only be labeled as Piebald." In other words, Piebald is Piebald. I, having been known to frequently compare other bands to Piebald, would hasten to agree that, indeed, Piebald reminds me quite a bit of themselves. Yet the new Piebald is, in fact, quite different from the old; maybe it's experience or maybe it's their hefty recording budget, but "If it Weren't for Venetian Blinds..." blows all of Piebald's old stuff out of the water with a twelve-gauge shotgun. The album's opener, "Grace Kelly With Wings," starts off sounding like a good, if uninspired, emo song, and then proceeds to completely defy any standards of what "emo" should be. The rest of the album, which is both lyrically and musically excellent, is no exception. Ross may take umbrage to the ultra hi-fidelity recording quality, which I feel Piebald lacked in the past, but I think it allows the band to truly shine. And the recording hasn't gotten rid of the slightly off-kilter vocals which sound horrible when parroted by imitators but are pulled off brilliantly by Piebald. As they sing in "Mess with the Bulls:" "It's not funny like ha-ha/It's funny like I told you so." And Piebald should be laughing all the way to the bank on this one. DF

Pinhead Circus "Everything Else is for a Gone Conclusion" (BYO) CD- I was really expecting to hate this for two reasons: 1) it's on BYO and I tend to not like much that BYO puts out (even though they do, I admit, pull a jem out of the clear blue sky every now and then); and, 2) 'cause this band is from Colo-

rado and who ever heard of a good punk band from Colorado? To my surprise they're not that bad in that Eveready—back when Eveready was good—kind of way. It seems like kind of a tired type of music to play—you know, that Fat Wreck-esque punk circa 1994—but PC pulls it off pretty well. RS

Pinhead Gunpowder "Shoot the Moon" (Adeline) CD- I don't believe in condescending or talking down to my dearly beloved readers, so I'm going to give you the benefit of the doubt and assume you're already familiar with the various punk rock celebrities that are in this band. And if you're not, well, it doesn't matter, because the music is good enough to stand on its own. Seven more excellent songs in the same vein that Pinhead Gunpowder has mined before—that is, upbeat pop-punk with a grizzled edge and poetic lyrics. East Bay punk at its finest. My only complaint is that this is so short that it feels like it's over before it began. DF

Pinstripe "Astronomy" (Garbage Czar) CD- Travel thirty minutes down the road from my dearly beloved Wesleyan University and you'll bump into the far more prestigious and better-known Yale University, whose vibrant and active music scene serves as further proof that there is more to Connecticut indie rock than most outsiders would think. Pinstripe, the crown jewel of Yale bands, are as much of a name in local circles as anybody else I can think of. They must have spent a pretty penny for the packaging of their new CD, whose sound hovers somewhere between folk and indie rock. Pinstripe use acoustic rather than electric guitars, which is interesting as a deviation from standard indie music but also makes some of the heavier or more chaotic songs on the CD come off as rather wimpy sounding. Three cheers to these guys for putting out a solid first effort, but they're going to need to expand on their sound before I can wholeheartedly get into them. DF

Planes Mistaken for Stars (Deep Elm) CD- I'm tempted to reprint the glowing review I gave this CD the first time around a few issues back, considering that this really isn't a new CD but rather a rerelease of the band's self-pressed, hard to find album. Normally, of course, I'd be crying foul. But if there's one album in the world that deserves to be rereleased to a larger audience, it's this one. Planes Mistaken for Stars put the "emo" back in emo music, delivering fiery, punky songs that tear at your heartstrings but aren't cheesily effusive. What can I say? I loved this album before and I love it now. And now that you know how to get it, there's really no excuse to own what I consider to be one of the best underground punk albums of the past few years. DF

Plow United "The Dustbin of History" (Coolidge) CD- I remember when I first began school at Cornell, I would always hear the guys in I-farm (and Dave Brown of Muddle fame) tell anyone who would listen about what a great band Plow United were. So I went out and bought one of their older albums when I saw it in a used bin at the local record store. It was terrible, 3-chord Jersey pop-punk with no real hooks or anything that set them apart. I think what really drew Dave to Plow United was that they were from New Jersey too and grew up in the same scene. Thus, if you're into punk and the only other really well known punk band (that I can think of off the top of my head) to come out of Jersey were the Bouncing Souls, you have to have to root for your pals, who happened to be Plow United Dave Brown. This CD isn't quite a discography. It's more like 27 tracks from various seven inches and practice/live tapes. Needless to

say the recording quality on 20 of the songs is absolutely lo-fi which doesn't really mix well for blazing drums and (what I imagine are) super fast bass lines (but I can't quite hear the bass to know for sure). So the moral of the story is: if your pals are in a band, then buy their stuff even if they suck. Translation: I have never met the guys in Plow United (and they do seem like really cool, funny guys), so I would not pay money for their stuff. RS

The Pork Guys (Self-Starter Foundation) 7" The most distinct thing about this band, besides the fact that they hail from Connecticut is their drummer. His name is Moby. You may have heard of him. If you've been out of the musical loop for a while, though, I'll fill you in: looks like Moby has abandoned the world of electronica and moved on to punk rock. I don't mean to jump to conclusions, seeing as how I'm a drummer myself, but usually the drummer doesn't have a whole lot of creative influence in the band, and I certainly hope that's the case with the Pork Guys because Moby can write better tunes than this. Four decent live recordings of rather hum-drum hardcore songs; if it weren't for the superstar drummer and the cinnamon-brown vinyl, this would have passed beneath my radar completely. DF

The Proms "Helpless Romantic" (Mutant Pop) CD- This poppy, rocking band from Ohio has clearly taken their cues from the Beach Boys and the Queers, and their songs are so jam-packed with harmonic backing vocals that I think they may have outdone the Mr. T Experience in the bubblegum department. Every song is about a girl and there's all those "whoa-ohs" I love so much. Candyapple pop-punk tunes that are pretty much guaranteed to put you in a good mood. DF

Redemption 87 "All Guns Poolside" (Blackout!) CD- I never get tired of bands putting fliers in the insert. I'm serious, I really enjoy it. Anyway, this is mostly angry hardcore that's brutal without being metal or tough guy. I can hear some connections to the Youth Crew thing, but this is a little more punk. This disc also includes Negative Approach, Bad Brains, Cro-Mags, and Youth of Today covers, as well as a few demo tracks. This is one of those bands that must be really big that I have never heard of and consequently should feel foolish for my ignorance. Throw your fist in the air and sing along; judging from the live photos in the insert, I'm sure the band will appreciate it. JM

Reggie and the Full Effect "Greatest Hits '84-'87" (Second Nature) CD- I have this problem I've built up for myself. Every time I hear about a CD that sounds cool I get really excited until it shows up in my mailbox. Then, I play it on my walk home to check it out. Of course, with my expectations built up that high, I get shot down more often than not. For instance, I heard this band was made up of members of the Getup Kids and Coalesce (but the singer of this band, who plays drums in Coalesce, is the new keyboardist for the Getup Kids, so I guess it's really just members of the GUKs), that same situation happened. This is slow to mid-tempo pop along the lines of Weezer or The Rentals. Unfortunately, the vocals are really annoying, the guitar tone is far too metal for pop music, and the weird sample-type things they do after every single song are cool for the first listen and absolutely annoying as hell after that (except for the Happy Chickens which is so cool). But, with a better producer and a little bit less fucking around this band does have potential. RS

Robots (Sampson) CD- This was a very pleasant surprise. Subtle, subdued indie rock that occasionally explodes into a noise howl. Another point in Robots' favor is that there is very little singing;

not that I think the singer is bad or the lyrics are ridiculous, I just think the strength here is the music and I want to hear it without being distracted. Some of this is slow and redundant, but for the most part, the songs are engaging and well crafted. Points are also given for a nice minimalist layout. Great CD. **JM**

Rodriguez "Swing Like A Metronome" (Devil In The Woods) CD- Quiet twerpy pop stuff, with a understated high male vocal and that offbeat edge that the kids love these days. Indie-pop fans will find this charming, so if Kindercore is in your vocabulary there you have it. Actually, this is pretty solid stuff, even if you're like me and prefer your pop with hooks and organs. Rodriguez pulls off a mellow and beautiful sound that, on the high notes, can drive one to introspection. Maybe we could put them on tour with Gomez for a "Bands With Latin Names That Indie Rockers Find Amusing." The label, coincidentally, is distributed and backed by Nu Gruv Alliance, an outfit better known for stellar underground hip-hop and dance music. Solemn, sad pop that hits the mark. **DP**

Ronnie Dawson "More Bad Habits" (Yep Roc) CD- Maybe you've heard of Ronnie Dawson, maybe not. Either way, you should know who he is. This Texas legend is one of the originators of rockabilly-country, and he still remains at the forefront of the style. Remember, this is the real deal, not a bunch of aging punks who think that covering Johnny Cash is "americana." Dawson is, as of this year, 70 years old and he rocks like a motherfucker. From his ever-blond visage to the vicious energy he constantly injects into his music, this man has not aged but improved. This is the first US studio recording of him since the 60's and it's brilliant, pure authenticity. This country doesn't sell millions of records anymore, but it's the only kind with formidable substance. Whether you're a huge country fan or you still think country music is some slick crap by someone named Shania, pick this up. Dawson's guitar has a way of cutting through the bullshit real quick. **DP**

Rye Coalition "The Lipstick Game" (Gern Blandsten) CD- New Jersey's bad boys of hardcore-cum-indie-cum-rock are back with their second full length. I know I am going to be the only one who says this but I am a bit disappointed with this record. Maybe it's because you don't find any songs like "The Higher the Hair the Closer to God" which combine the groove of Nation of Ulysses with the balls to the wall preaching of the Make-up. Or, it could be because the songs are not as frenetically catchy as "The Buzzard." This album is being promoted as the next great thing in rock and roll, but I may be the only one who feels that Rye's last full length was more rock. This record is really good, mind you, and it will not disappoint die-hard Rye fans (and I know there are those of you out there). I mean, I'll be damned if "The Lipstick Game" isn't the perfect album to have really raunchy sex to! It may even have some more musical maturity (whatever that means) and progression, but if you're looking for the next great thing in rock, as in a better album than "He Saw the Kat," then I think you should wait for the next record. **RS**

Ryker's "Life's a Gamble" (Century Media) CD- Okay, I take back what I said in the Haste review about CM putting out a lot of good hardcore, 'cause I wrote that review before I heard this. Ryker's are a NY hardcore band (and I'm pretty sure they're not natives) that play really generic hardcore with metal tinges and

nothing new or interesting to offer. The vocals sound like Sheer Terror or the shittier side of Integrity. This is tough guy hardcore at its worst. **RS**

Sean Na Na "In this Hole/Mezcal" (Bread Machine) 7"- The unicorns on the cover of this are appropriate because unicorns only appear in dreams and this record put me to sleep. Slow, melodic, lullaby-like songs that would do much better on an album in between louder, more energetic songs. This could be good background music to a really stoic movie. Someone should have told Sean that a 7" is more for energy and emotion than bedtime stories. God, make the most of your 8 minutes, damnit! Overall, this is like a dose of audio tranquilizer. **PR**

Sean Na Na/Lucky Jeremy (Heart of a Champion) 7"- I really loved Sean Tilman's (another wise known as Sean Na Na—old band, Calvin Krime. Their frantic brand of rock and roll energized and antagonized me in the best of ways. Now Sean is back after CK's break up with a completely different sound. Instead of hard hitting drum beats and spastic guitars we have this acoustic trio. It isn't that bad—although it's certainly not that great—and I might like it a whole lot more if I could get Sean's screamy CK voice out of my head. I loved that voice over those manic guitars and I feel that Sean's new project leaves much to be desired because of that. Lucky Jeremy is very much the same thing, except he has no back-up band on this recording as Sean does. I guess some fans of off-kilter folk might find these two appealing but it a) bores the hell out of me; and, b) seems to lo-fi to really hit me where it counts. **RS**

Sensefield "Sense Field" (Warner Bros.) CD- Sensefield is one of the increasing number of "emo" bands that has opted for major label obscurity over indie stardom. During the signing process I'm sure they were aware that the huge recording budget, which comes hand-in-hand with a major label deal, would let them experiment and add further layers to their already complex songs. Honestly, I haven't been wild about anything the band has done since "Building" way back in their Revelation days. This album, their major label debut, is definitely a good album if you forget about their less polished (yet still well crafted) earlier albums. However, aside from some excellent production and a wide array of guitar tones, I don't find anything that makes this album special. There are no songs like "Overstand"—one of the most emotional-yet-unsappy melodicore songs I've ever heard—on this album that I can single out as jems. It seems as if Sensefield have forgotten their indie—much less hardcore—roots and have made an innovative yet quite mediocre album. For an album that comes after a 3 year hiatus and employed a 1/4 million dollar budget... I expected more. **RS**

Scared of Chaka "Tired of You" (Sub City) CD- Fool that I am, I've neglected to pick up Scared of Chaka's last few releases, and although I adore their first album "Hutch Brown Sayngwich," I really haven't kept myself up-to-date on the band. But after listening to their new album, I'm starting to think that I need to make it a priority to run out to the store and buy their entire back catalogue. Sharper production than their earlier releases and the addition of keyboards and tambourines on a number of the songs make this garage-y pop-punk album a definite keeper. Do Scared of Chaka rock? Helllllll yeahhhhhh! **DF**

Sheilbound "Counting on Abacus" (Playing Field) CD- Gosh, the emo genre (no matter how stupid that label may be) is getting so all-inclusive that virtually anything falls under the "emo" category. What was once just rock, or better indie rock, is now emo. With that said I really don't know how to label Sheilbound in order to give you a good description. They play mid-tempo, melodic rock with a lot of those rollicking drum beats and minimalist guitar solos made

famous by early Promise Ring stuff. But, I sense a bit of quirkiness in Sheilbound's music which a) puts them in a different category than most typical emo stuff; and, b) makes it hard for me to simply describe them as a rip-off band. I sense something very original going on in the writing process in this music, and I like it. Songs like "Rapid Transit" show an awareness of melody and rhythm not found in most emo bands. This is different enough to keep it interesting, but standard enough to keep it good. **RS**

Six Going on Seven "Heartbreak's Got Backbeat" (Some) CD- Let's face it, Six going on Seven are the quintessential emo band. I mean, didja see the cover of their first record? Or, check out the name of this album. Of course, all the songs on this album are about relationships: past, present, good, bad, etc....relationships. But, Six Going on Seven really live up to that slogan on one of their T-shirts that says "Songs to break hearts to" 'cause the next time I get my heart broken I'm positive I will be playing this record while driving around San Francisco smoking cigarettes. To be quite honest, I was a little bit annoyed when I first popped in this record and found that it was virtually the same sound as on their first record. Don't get me wrong, this band has one of the most distinct and easily recognizable sounds in indie rock (damn is Josh's voice gorgeous). But, the more I listened to the record I found that although the tone and atmosphere is exactly the same as the last record, this album really takes that sound to new levels of texture and layering not previously found in their music. Let me forwarn you: there are no absolute hits on this record—only one or two songs stand out from the rest—, but the record is great and the mood it creates is a dreamland. **RS**

Six of One Half Summers "This Years Version of These Chords" (Liberty Park) CD- I swear, the first song on this album ("Look At That Left Coast") stole a riff from a Hot Water Music song. It was uncanny, I thought I had thrown in the wrong CD. Not too say that this is surprising; the rest of the disc does have certain HWM quality to it, though the vocals are much more emo. I guess the largest similarity is the emphasis on rock, which is never a bad thing. The CD has recording issues, though; the vocals were laid down in such a way that I could barely make out what they are saying. It sounds like someone mumbling while they yell. Points are also taken away from the few guitar solos; I don't care how short they are, they have no business on this album. Still, this CD isn't that bad. It's just got heavy competition this issue; this would be a better review if I had received more bad punk rock. **JM**

Skinlab "Disembody: the New Flesh" (Century Media) CD- So, I just got this new computer. As computer sound-systems are getting better by the hour I thought I'd test out the new Skinlab CD on my computer's speakers. So I popped the disk in the CD-Rom drive and the computer proceeded to crash. I tried again... and it crashed again. I have learned a very important lesson today: if my new computer does not like bands that sound like Machine Head meets Godsmack, then neither will I. **RS**

The Slackers "The Question" (Hellcat) CD- In recent years, I've noticed that the public has unsurprisingly and understandably fallen out of love with most ska music. Like most musical genres, ska's popularity has had its peaks and valleys, and there is no doubt that, excepting the musical pabulum of bands like Save Ferris or Reel Big Fish, so-called "ska-punk" is at an all-time low. And faux-traditional ska hasn't been spared the public's wrath either, as is evidenced by the lukewarm reaction that Rancid's rocksteady-tinged flop "Life Won't Wait" received a year or two ago. And that's why it's so refreshing for me to hear a band that does traditional ska well, that restores some of the polish to a

musical art form that used to be new and innovative until it was corrupted by billions of generic Op Ivy wannabes. New York's Slackers have been around for a while, and they've always been good, but this album is easily their tour de force, a lengthy release with nary a bad song. Choosing for the most part to substitute melody and grooves for speedy riffs, the Slackers are obviously drawing heavily from the first wave of Jamaican ska. But they also prove themselves to be more than just imitators, delving into mambo songs, touching "ska ballads" (if such a thing can exist), and funky reggae-esque songs that even Marley fans would love. There's a recurring musical theme that appears throughout the album (after a point, admittedly, it does get a bit tiring to hear the Slackers repeatedly sing "shoo-be-doo-be-doo-be doop doop"), but I have to begrudgingly admit that even that is pretty catchy. This is probably the best traditional ska album I've ever heard that isn't from an actual traditional ska band. **DF**

Snapcase/Boy Sets Fire "Snapcase vs Boysetsfire" (Equal Vision) CD- Do you really need to read this review? Are you actually still wondering whether this would be good? If you are then you probably got into hardcore yesterday. Two of the best bands in hardcore throw out one original each and one Police cover each in their respective distinctive styles. C'mon, have either of these bands released anything bad to date yet? and what reason do they have to start putting out shit now? Putting out an incredible disc with either of these two bands is like shooting fish in a barrel (and I don't care what you say, Rama, Boy Sets Fire rocks!) **RS**

Some Day Soon "The Cavenline" (Magic Bullet) CDEP- Damn boy, where did this come from? I hope this ep is the teaser to an upcoming full length 'cause this great. Sure it sounds like Hot Water Music, but it is also noticeably different than them. I mean, you've got your dual vocals, groovy rhythms, and melodies that will have every kid in the place rocking back and forth for a half an hour. But, the vocals are less gruff than HWM, there are less breakdowns, and this is a bit more melodic. I don't know what to say, I didn't expect this to be this good, and I am very pleasantly surprised. I would look hard for this. **RS**

Speak 714 "The Scum Also Rises" (Revelation) CDEP- I won't lie to you, straight up: I love this band. Speak 714 is the latest incarnation of Orange County hardcore fixture Dan O'Mahony (No For An Answer, Camy Nation, 411, etc.). He's been heavily criticized for losing the edge, developing a gambling and drinking problem and then writing 2 heavy handed books about the whole deal. After a long absence, O'Mahony returned to music last year with the release of Speak's first album, "Knee Deep In Guilt". For that album, the lineup consisted of Joe D. Foster (Ignite), Samuel Mams (Straight Faced) and Doug McKinnon (ex-Slapshot) and has since changed entirely, but the keystone is, as always, O'Mahony's fierce vocals and sharp, personal lyrics. There's just something ever-progressive about his work, almost as if fans have watched his personal growth and development through the music from the beginning. The music itself is total OC hardcore (fast and invigorating, with some technical songwriting between the dual guitars and an underlying sense of melody) that manages to prove that one can still find something to believe in after surviving years of hardcore rhetoric. Dan's apparently still growing. Truly something that stands out from all the "toughguy" acts nowadays, these 4 songs aren't enough. **DP**

Spoon "Anticipation" (Mag Wheel)

7- Mag Wheel seems to have a knack for picking up pretty good bands shortly after they've released something on a bigger label. It's sort of the same strategy that the Florida Marlins used when they were just starting out, if you think about it. And look where the Marlins are now! Not too long ago, Spoon released an album called "A Series of Sneaks" to critical acclaim, so I'm not sure if this is a step up or a step down for them, but no matter. Two songs on this 7", both vaguely reminiscent of the Pixies. Pretty decent but not great. **DF**

Starflyer 59 "Fell in Love at 22" (Tooth & Nail)

CDep- Okay, let's get the bad part out of the way first. Starflyer 59 are on Tooth & Nail Records, a label I make no bones about being wary of due to its religious nature. Not that this fact alone is enough to damn a band in my mind, particularly if the band itself isn't preachy, but it does put me on edge just a little. I don't have a problem when bands explore the spiritual (Neutral Milk Hotel's "In the Aeroplane Over the Sea" comes to mind), but pushing a religious agenda through music—well, it weird me out. Yes, there's a little bit of religion mixed up in the lyrics here, and I can't say that's a positive thing in my mind, but it's not exactly as if Starflyer 59 is a rip-off of D.C. Talk, either lyrically or musically. As a matter of fact (and here's the good part) they play exquisitely beautiful shoegazer dream pop, so beautiful that it shimmers. The title track, with lighter-than-air guitars floating over a gentle piano track and augmented by chimes, is a piece of dreamy melancholia that still has a pop sensibility. Excellent going-to-bed music, even if it is... you know.... **DF**

Starmarket "Calendar" (Deep Elm) CD- Deep Elm has been putting out some great releases lately, and this CD is no exception. Starmarket has some of the characteristics of an emo band, but there is a heavy emphasis on rock here. Because of this, the music isn't subservient to the singer and thin; the sound here is thick, jangly, and energetic. I have no idea who I could correctly compare this CD to, which makes me like it that much more. The singer's voice takes a minute to get accustomed to, but after that obstacle is passed, it's smooth sailing. This one is great for summer, because every time I throw it on, I want to get outside and have fun... after the CD is over, of course. **JM**

Staynless "Transistor Theory and Circuits Made Simple" (Undecided) CD-

I have never heard of this band but I really hope I hear more from them in the future. This record was recorded by Steve Albini and bares a decidedly Steve Albini touch that all his records seem to share. You know, that frantic tension that he can create in everyone of the bands he works with except his own. Heh heh. Anyways, this album is one of the more unique records I've received in a while while still maintaining that mathy feel that only Chicago can produce. This record really defies comparison as it doesn't quite fit into the Chicago or DC scenes but possibly a good synthesis of both cities' traditional punk rock sounds. One thing that is really cool is when these guys start out their songs with mathy melodic parts with spoken word over the top then jump into quick DC-esque hardcore parts. I don't know how easy this record will be to find, but it is worth checking out... even if every song does sound the same. **RS**

The Stereo "Three Hundred" (Fueled by Raman) CD-

I must admit at times The Stereo had me rocking in my seat. There are some awesome harmonies, wow-ohs, and hand-clap backgrounds on this disc. But, damn does this band sound like Weezer. I mean, I like Weezer as much as the next guy—c'mon

they're one of the most original power-pop bands out there— but this takes it a step too far. It's almost as if The Stereo, an Austin Texas duet (two guys play everything on the disc), wrote this album in order to get signed under the premise that they sound just like Weezer. When The Stereo rock out they do a damn good job, combining pop-punk guitars with radio-friendly melodies (although I could do without the piano songs), and who the fuck really cares if they're set to be the next big thing? This band brings back everything you loved about pop-punk: unpretentious, upbeat, and smart. **RS**

Sterling Silver "Leave Before it's Black" (Slowdance) CD-

Although, Sterling Silver show flashes of originality, this record left me with nothing. Melodic, mid-tempo, girl/boy vocals, arpeggios out the wazoo—the works. Sterling Silver can create some good melodies and harmonies on this disc, but when compared to many of the bands coming out of San Diego—or many of the bands playing clean, emotional, indie-rock nowadays—I really don't see anything that raises them above the pack. This made it to my CD player a few times, but I don't think it's catchy or inspiring enough to make it back. There were some cool rhythms here, though, which was refreshing. **RS**

Sunday's Best "Where you are now" (Crank!) CD-

Some days I really hate emo. Lately I've been hating everything labelled emo a lot more. It's probably because I'm back in San Francisco and in the (what used to be) punk scene all you hear is "emo this" and "emo that." People even have this way of saying emo, like it's some old friend they haven't seen for years. It sickens me how everyone here—a place where punk was formerly made up of a dedicated group of iconoclasts—jumps on the next bandwagon that happens to have heart and melody. So, in 1999 that bandwagon in emo. I admit, I may have jumped on that bandwagon a few years ago when I moved to the east coast, but there no one says the word "emo" like it's their dead puppy dog. So anyways, unfortunately for Sunday's best they caught me on one of those days when I am not into "emo," unfortunately for them they are the spitting image of Mineral, unfortunately for them their singer can't sing on key, unfortunately for them... I hate this. **RS**

Superchunk "Come Pick Me Up" (Merge) CD-

For as long as I can remember, two bands have been synonymous with "indie rock" in my mind: Pavement and Superchunk. Pavement's new album may veer off into the spacerock territory, but on "Come Pick Me Up," their fifth (sixth? seventh?) album, Superchunk sticks to what they know best. No big surprises here, just lots of gently tweaked pop music that you either love or you hate. You know the deal: jangly guitars, occasional string sections, music that doesn't get in your face but doesn't put you to sleep either. If anything, the music here is more mature than Superchunk's earlier efforts. Nothing here is groundbreaking or thrilling, but Superchunk are the best-known of all the Merge bands for a reason: they know what they do, and they do it damn well. **DF**

Sweep the Leg Johnny "Tomorrow we will Run Faster" (Southern) CDep-

There seems to be a bunch of bands on the indie rock circuit nowadays that label-owners and (a few) critics love, but the kids just don't dig. Sweep the Leg Johnny is one of them. It seems like every label in Chicago has put something out by this math rock quartet which strikes me as odd since they're a bit too quirky to attract a large national

following. This CD contains 5 songs which have good dynamics and that's about it. They're all pretty incohesive, thus incoherent. I give them props for trying to push the boundaries of originality, but sometimes those boundaries are there for a reason. Namely good music. **RS**

Swingin' Utters "Brazen Head" (Fat Wreck Chords) CD-

Don't laugh at me, but I think there's something really poetic about the Swingin' Utters music. Beneath their tough guy image, what this band really excels at is finding the beauty in lost lives drowned in gin and left to wander on the streets. When you come right down to it, that's what the whole 'streetpunk' thing is all about: finding the humanity behind the all the tattoos and beer cans and so on. Maybe it's a half-baked theory but I really see the Swingin' Utters as storytellers for that whole lifestyle. In any case, this six-song EP, proves that they haven't run out of ideas. As a matter of fact, this is their strongest material since the brilliant "Streets of San Francisco" came out a few years ago. They ham things up a bit by using an organ on the first song, but for the most part, the Utters avoid the experiments in musical styles that marred their last album, choosing instead to explore and expand upon the singalong punk they do so well. This is great music to hum as you walk along dusty train tracks on a hot day in Berkeley. **DF**

Uniform Pants "The Execution of Hiram Abiff" (Tri'Force) CD-

First off, what's up with the band name? Is that supposed to be some bad pun on the late great hardcore outfit, Uniform Choice? Hmmm, don't know about that one. Anyway, I didn't get a press sheet for this band, so I'll just have to guess that they're from Illinois like their label. I'll also have to guess that these guys are really into a lot of the stuff that bands like Agoraphobic Nosebleed—or even more chaotic bands like Noisegate—'cause this is definitely noisy punk rock. Basically it's just a wandering bass line over stop/start drums, blast beats aplenty, with a healthy dose of guitar feedback to round out the edges. Oh yeah, the singer sounds like Jake from Converge, if Jake sucked and didn't write lyrics but merely just yelled "ahhh ahhh argh agribury...." Um, I'm confused. **RS**

Tales from the Birdbath "Baron von Birdbath" (Empty) CD-

Well, this is the new project of Ean from the late/great Seattle pop-punk trio, Sicko, and they sure win points for the strangeness of their name (but then again, I guess there could be a lot of interesting stories to tell about a birdbath). Unlike the gutsy punk of Sicko, this band plays jingley, melodic pop. I definitely hear some Sicko in the music, but that may just be Ean's great voice in my mind. Songs like "Scooter Boy," "Olympia Song," and "Snowcone" make this disc worthwhile, 'cause at their best Tales from the Birdbath manage to conjur up some inspired pop songs that make me wish Seattle was still a cool place as far as music goes. This definitely was one of the happier releases I've heard in a while, as every song creates images of pogo dancing, but it really wasn't anything groundbreaking. If you like bands like Sicko, The Hi-Fives, or MTX you'll probably like this. I, on the other hand, find this good for only a few listens. **RS**

Teen Idols "Pucker Up!" (Honest Don's) CD-

It's a sign that your zine has been around the block when you find yourself reviewing a band's second CD a full year after you've reviewed their first. God, I'm getting old. Thankfully, though, the Teen Idols' sound remains fresh, and although there isn't too much of a difference between this and their first, self-titled album, the guitar hooks and the bubblegum harmonies are just a little bit sharper and catchier. The Teen Idols continue to refine the Ramones-styled pop-punk sound, with increasingly successful results. Don't be fooled by the leather jackets and greased hair; this is what the Beach Boys would probably sound like if they actually had the balls to rock out. **DF**

Ten Yard Fight "The Only Way" (EVR) CDep- I'm not a tough guy. I'm not good at dancing and my stage dives are so poor. I'm not even that vocal about being straight-edge. Despite these facts, I love Ten Yard Fight. This CD is no exception. Seven songs (only six on the vinyl, so get the disc) that rock hard in a youth crew way with lyrics about having fun and staying true to yourself and your friends. I could do without the tough guy attitude, but everything else about this disc rocks. If you haven't heard Ten Yard Fight, pick up this CD and check them out. Fuck the backlash against youth crew. **JM**

The Third Degree (Finn/Indecision) CD-

All right, I'm not usually that picky about lyrics, but this time it's important. "Your God/Your drug/Your Christ/Your Crutch/Has Left You Alone" ("Real Men Love Jesus")... Is this a joke? And the sad thing is all the lyrics are that bad.. Yuck. Musically, this is just a heavy rock band with some surf tendencies and bad quasi-tough guy vocals. The mood intended is supposed to be dark, but I can't help laughing. To quote my mom, "I wouldn't feed this to my dog." **JM**

Time in Malta "Construct and Demolish" (Escape Artist) CD-

This band is poised to be huge. Everything from the cover art to the production of the recording just screams power and emotion. A good way to describe them would be to take the most melodic parts of Cave-in (without losing the power) and combine that with everything you like about Torches to Rome. I cannot say enough good things about this band other than I wish to God they would agree to put something out on my label. This band is the next face of hardcore. **RS**

Trial "Are These Our Lives?" (Equal Vision) CD-

I've heard so many good things about this band the past few months, which is weird since they haven't released anything in a couple of years I think. I've listened to this CD about 15 times trying to let it sink in and create some inspiration for a witty review poking fun at Seattle's answer to hardcore. I really can't come up with anything bad to say about this disc, in fact, this is one of the best hardcore bands I've heard in a long time. I'm generally really wary when it comes to bands with Noam Chomsky quotes all over their liner notes or other overt politics at that since they usually amount to no more than "the world sucks, government sucks, the environment is dying: kill the rich." Trial do not do that. They point out some world atrocities past and present and proclaim what they expect from people to help renege those atrocities. While they are not as specific in their critiques of politics as say, Born Against or Propagandhi, they know where they stand, thus the listener does too. Musically, I had heard that Trial were youth-crew type stuff, but they're not. Instead, Trial are one of the few bands that uses youth-crew drum beats and bass lines with heavy-as-fuck, metal guitar crunch. Result? Trial have one of the most in-your-face, no-holds-barred sounds in hardcore today. If you buy three hardcore records all year, buy this. **RS**

Tristeza "Spine and Sensory" (Makoto) CD-

I was very jazzed to get this CD for review, because I was blown away by Tristeza's stellar 7" on Calfine and Nicotine and because Ross assured me it would be excellent. Now I don't know quite to say. I think the 7" set my standards so high that I had unreasonable expectations for the CD. Not that this is bad; far from it! It's beautifully dreamy, melodic instrumental music that sounds like Godspeed You Black Emperor would if they decided to become a spacey indie rock band. The only problem with the CD is that it doesn't beg to be played and replayed and replayed again like the 7" did. It's still good, it's just not Tristeza's best work. But

don't get me wrong! I like it! Really I do! DF

U.S. Bombs "The World" (Hellcat) CD- I remember meeting the singer of this band at the Warped Tour last year. He looked like he had fallen through a time warp from late-'70s London into a world where spiked hair, bleach splattered jeans, and small master locks around the neck were suddenly cool. The fact that his front two teeth were missing did not help my impression of the band. Thus, when I popped this disc into my CD player I was wholeheartedly expecting to hate this. But, to my surprise the US Bombs play music very similar to "Give 'em Enough Rope" era Clash, which is always a plus in my book. As a matter of fact the vocals and background vocals sound hauntingly like a Joe Strummer/Mick Jones combo. What's this? they even cover "Joe's Tune" on this record! As you can tell this is clearly reminiscent of what's already been done. But, at least they pick The Clash who are the best punk band of all time instead of playing more NOFX or Bad Religion riffs. RS

V/A "Spanglish 101" (Brujeria) CD- This would probably be found much easier at Sam Goody than Lumberjack online since this label is owned by the guitarist for Faith No More. Anyways, my view is a little bit skewed on this comp because I've been itching for some Spanish music that I could rock out on mi pene afuera for years. An interesting mix of hip-hop, punk, metal/grind, dance, and straight-out rock both in Spanish and English (hence Spanglish). Highlights include Brujeria (cheesy Satan-metal), Tezcatriza (girl grind), and Banana Hammoc (a non-Latino band from the Bay Area singing in Spanish—see it goes both ways). Funny idea, but I don't know if I'd shell out 10 bucks to buy this. PR

V/A "Identity Five: I Defy" (Century Media) CD- In a more decent and kind world, people wouldn't be able to play this kind of music with a straight face. Let's be honest, guitar solos and high-pitched vocals went out awhile ago (unless you're Brother's Keeper). This is a bunch of metal bands doing their thing, running from metalcore to death metal. In all fairness, Lacuna Coil, Haste, and Cryptopsy caught my attention, with the Turmoil track being the only thing that I enjoyed. The rest of it just made me think of teenagers playing D&D and listening to Manowar. Warning: must have a mullet to buy this CD. JM

V/A "Life in the Fat Lane" (Fat Wreck) CD- The fourth edition of the annual Fat samplers is here with more tasteless sleeve art. This, I think, is the most mediocre of all the Fat comps I've bought over the years. It could be due to Fat's roster being a bit stagnant as of late. But, if you liked the latest releases from Lagwagon, NOFX, Tilt, Swingin' Utters, SOIA, and Ataris—and bands along those lines—then this should be right up your alley (plus, there's an unreleased Avail song which is cool). It is, however, a little bit dull to me. RS

V/A "Short Music for Short People" (Fat Wreck) CD- This would be more original if it weren't for the fact that Too Many Records already released a similar concept album called "Wood Panel Pacer Wagon With Mags" a few years ago. Still, it makes sense that someone should take the short-and-fast mentality that lies at the core of punk rock to its logical extreme, releasing a CD of 101 punk bands—and old, playing songs that are 30 seconds apiece. A few bands bend the rules a bit here with songs clocking in around 40 seconds, but I'm nonetheless

surprised that the bands here can do such a variety of things with such a short amount of time. No need to mention every track here, but there are particularly good little tidbits from Teen Idols, Nerf Herder, The Living End, Anti-Flag, and Radio Days. Lots of bad stuff too, but it didn't bother me much because if I didn't like a song I could just wait 30 seconds at it would be over. DF

V/A "Return of the Read Menace" (Honest Don's/AK Press) CD- Wasn't it Epitaph, not Honest Don's, that put out the last benefit CD for the anarchist cooperative AK Press? Why did the label change? Hmm. Food for thought. But for all those who had a hunch that Honest Don's was a better label than Epitaph, the proof here is in the pudding, as this compilation reads like a veritable who's-who of talented contemporary punk bands, spanning the stylistic gamut from the goofy synth-pop of Atom and His Package to the riot grrl sounds of Canada's Submission Hold. As with most compilations, not everything here is good, but this has an above-average hit-to-miss ratio, and even bands who I don't usually like, such as No Use for a Name, put it unusually good songs. And some of the songs, such as the lilting folk piece from Ron Hawkins, are downright beautiful. Unlike 95% of the compilations that I get for review and then never listen to again, I could easily foresee myself listening to this again in the future. I'm not an anarchist myself, but the folks at AK Press definitely have their heads screwed on right, and they could definitely use your help, so check this out. DF

V/A "Swing Sucks" (Liberation) CD- Judging from the success of their two previous 'genre compilation' CDs, "Punk Sucks" and "Ska Sucks," I have no doubt in my mind that Liberation will rake in a pretty penny from this collection of big-band swing songs. If I were you, I'd save my money for "Polka Sucks" or "Gregorian Chants Suck," which I'm sure can't be too far down the line. All kidding aside, though, this is a quality showcase of a range of current swing bands, some of whom are fairly well-known (Royal Crown Revue, Lee Press On & The Nails) but most of whom are new to me. This would perfectly compliment your next martini party. And if you should accidentally spill a bit of that vermouth gin on the case, no need to worry! The liner notes double as a napkin! DF

V/A "The Got A Minute? Compilation" (Microcosm) CD- Man, I love compilations like this, but people got to realize—SHITTY ART equals SHITTY RESPONSE. How do I not feel bad when a good record is marred by thoughtless design? There are too many CDs being released to ignore this crucial aspect! Van damn! Ok, I'm done. This is a solid comp of punk (pop punk and real punk) from primarily the northeast with a few exceptions (CA, GA, ALB, AZ, NM, HI) with a lot of mixed production value. Plenty of throwaway whiny pop-punk but there are lots of great acts here—Felix Frump opens up the disc well, The Gunga Dins kick your ass soon thereafter with great lightspeed power-trash, Discount is standout as usual with great guitars and those buttery female vox, The Martians are too eclectic and weird to ignore their wildy messy 3 tracks, The Clockouts might have "borrowed" the concept for "Riot At Taco Bell" from the late Jiker's "Brawl At The Hut(Pizza Hut)" but I'll let sleeping dogs lie. Of the 44 tracks here, I'll try to rattle off the standouts: The Bellrays play killer soul-garage raunch that deserves better recording, Egghead is so silly-nerdy that a track like "Goofyfoot" makes me smile, the great upstate NY diehards Abalienation (someone sign these guys!!) pull off great hard pogo punk-trash, Headboard is surprising tight hip hop inna early Beastie mode, Operation:Cliff Clavin and Suburban Core should justify their names with better music, No Class provides 50 seconds of solid street punk, and Churl is blazing loose scum-punk like the CandySnatchers. A

surprisingly balanced comp. DP

V/A "Southern Records Spring-Summer 1999 Compilation" (Southern) CD- Let's be honest, what was the last comp you enjoyed all the way through? This comp is no different; it's not to say that this is bad, but the mood changes from song to song, so there's no flow and no way to get into this as an album. There's some indie rock, emo, instrumental quasi-jazz, and whatever else; in other words, it's a label sampler. On a good note, it did make me want to checkout Emperor Penguin, Hurt, Burning Airlines (I know, I'm a little slow), Julie Dorion, and Do Make Say Think. A good one to get free, I say, to check out the rest of the goods. JM

V/A "Living Silent" (Status) CD- This comp has a pretty wide range of musical styles, from the metal-core of Milhouse and Adamantium to the indie melodies of Sharks Keep Moving and Waxwing. Overall, I don't think there are any jerms here. I mean, there really aren't any songs that make me say, 'damn, that song makes the whole thing worth it.' I think the tracks by all the bands I've heard of (Indecision, Treadwell, Midvale among others), but the songs by bands I've never heard of are obscure outfits for a reason (i.e. Unearthed and Defect really don't hold my attention for very long). This is definitely worth 7 or 8 bucks, but no more. RS

V/A "Take Action!" (Sub City) CD- Decent collection of mostly pop-punk acts off this Hopeless Records imprint. A benefit for the Foundation Fighting Blindness, it features a host of Hopeless artists (Against All Authority, Falling Sickness, Funeral Oration etc) and some surprises (Weakerthans, Algebra One, Kid Dynamite). Standouts include Scared Of Chaka whose fast hard-edged thick hardcore is only offset by vocals that could use more muscle; Kid Dynamite's rapid old-school fury of drums and backups (catchy with a good breakdown); The Weakerthans mellow weepy emo is a great breather from some of the more predictable poppunkmelodcore; Heckle remembers hard and fast edgy east coast hardcore; and Fifteen employs a few Fleetwood Mac (!) lines into one of their tracks and still proves themselves better than the rest of the pop-punk ocean with a nod to the old Cali progressive punk scene of the late 80's. Also of note are Algebra One, who contribute an emo-tinged rock buildup with some good strong playing. A nice departure from what often appears to be a linear roster of acts. DP

V/A "Just Look Around: Chapter 1" (Tolerance) CD- According to the liner notes of this CD, the "Just Look Around" series' goal is to "give you an idea of what is going on in today's flood of releases." Usually I'm not too cool with that (especially in the case of the Incompatible CD where every song is real easy to find elsewhere), but in this case I'll make an exception since many of the bands here are from abroad. It's mostly tough-guy hardcore sung in languages that I don't speak. There are a few stand-outs, though, from bands like At Any Cost (a good Bloodlet type band), Crivits, I.D.K (a good Pennywise type band), Piecemeal (a good Rob-era One King Down type band), and Stretch Arm Strong (a great band when considering the music, a dubious one when considering the message). Don't look too hard for this, but if you stumble upon it it this disc might be worth 4 or 5 bucks. RS

V/A "Incompatible 2" (Victory) CD- [note: please read the review of the zine part of this CD in the zine reviews section.] You know what? I was expecting not to like this comp. since most of the songs can be found elsewhere—and I hate comps with previously released material on them—and there were only a

few bands here that I really care about. Nonetheless, I did like this disc. The Anger Means track (ex-Strife) was good, as were the Ann Beretta, I Farm, Saves the Day, and Death by Stereo tracks. The rest of the songs on this disc—from the likes of Good Clean Fun, H2O, Gameface, Grey Area, etc.—I had already heard on their individual releases, but they were still pretty good. I guess, as a CD of songs alone, this CD is only good as a sampler of some up-and-coming hardcore bands at best, but the zine part of the CD makes this worth it. RS

Victory at Sea "The Dark is Just the Night" (Slowdime) CD- From what I gather this band has ex-members of June of '44. With that knowledge we can understand why Victory at Sea has song titles like "Under the Surface (of the Sea)," "Submarine," and "for the Swimmer," 'cause, afterall, JO44 has many songs with ocean themes (and according to my sister there was some big naval battle or ocean related event that happened in June of 1944). Anyway, Victory at Sea is a trio that occasionally employs strings in their slow, repetitive, moody art rock. This sounds like older Lungfish at times mixed with some Shipping News or something along those lines. Overall, I'm not terribly impressed. I guess there isn't enough variation from one song to the next, or in each song for that matter, to keep me interested for all 10 brooding tracks. RS

The Wanna-Bes "Saturday Night" (Mutant Pop) CD- Where does Mutant Pop find these bands? As I mentioned earlier, Mutant Pop has an entire line-up of bands that play pop-punk along the lines of either a) The Ramones, b) The Queers, or c) The Kung Fu Monkeys (oh wait, it is okay for Mutant Pop bands to sound like a band on their label?) Well anyway, The Wanna-Bes are no exception to Mutant Pop's trend of competent, fun, and catchy rock. There's a real surf-vibe going on here which leads me to hear more similarities to The Kung Fu Monkeys than to MTX or the Queers as most pop-punk is often compared to. Fun stuff, but again why would anyone desire this band over a better known pop-punk band, or even, say, the other 3 MP 7's we reviewed this issue? Well, I think that these guys are just wanna-bes. RS

Waxwing "For Madmen Only" (Second Nature) CD- Yeah, this is how it's done: desperate and dark is how I like my emo. I have no problem with the fun poppy stuff, but nothing is better for sitting alone in your room with the doors and windows closed than discs like this. Driving indie rock with lyrics abstractly dealing with relationships sung in that throty forlorn style that the kids love. Waxwing also does the soft-loud change-ups really well, instantly making me bounce in my chair. This CD is subtle and brutal in the tight space of a three-minute song, sometimes both at once. Get Waxwing for the nights this summer you don't feel like going out with your friends or significant other. JM

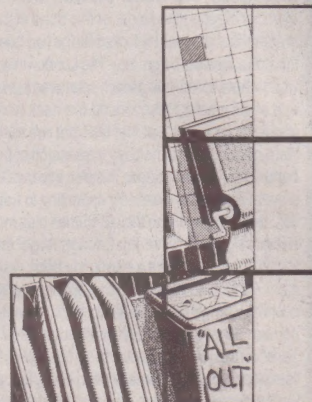
The Wicked Farleys "Sustained Interest" (Big Top) CD- An aptly-named second-effort from Boston's Wicked Farleys, who remain interesting-sounding this time around by mutating the more straight-ahead indie rock tone of their first album into a spacier, psychedelic sound. Lots of pedals and reverb and that type of thing. But the Farleys, careful not to let their music spiral out into the stratosphere, still have a firm grounding in Pavement style slacker rock. More textured and interesting than their first album, "Sustained Interest" has managed to meld together a melange of styles without sounding too patchwork. DF

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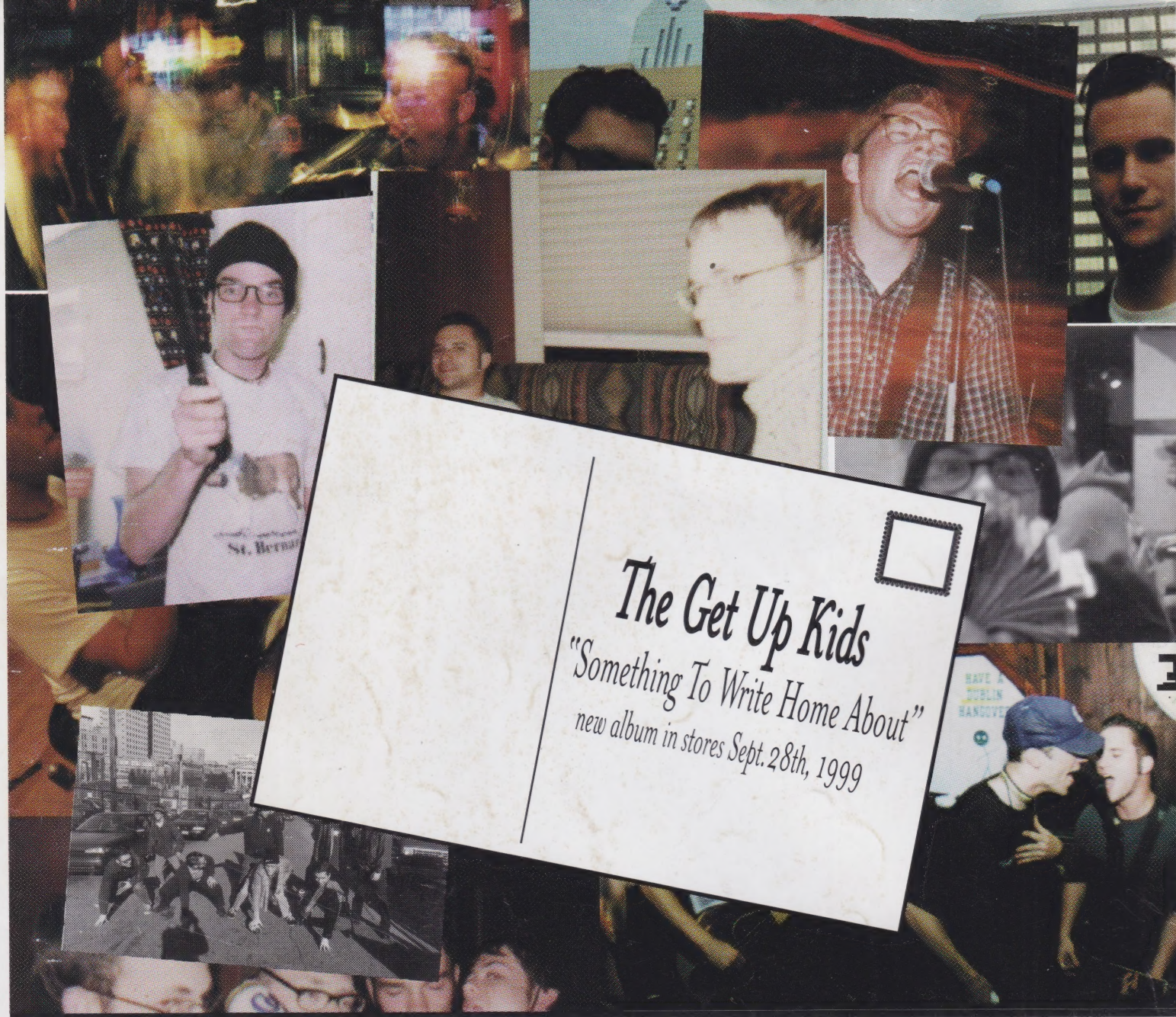
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